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ESSAYS ON THE SPOT

STEWART CHARLES DAVI

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BY

CHARLES DAVID STEWART

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THE AUTHOR TO HIS PUBLISHER

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AS to the Preface business. I don't know how much experience you have had with stubborn authors. I could burden you with forty pages on the preface subject in this particular instance, but at the same time I can put it in three words — "Won't do it." At the same time, also, I can see the force of the suggestion. The publisher wants unity in what he glues and stitches together, for purposes practical and artistic, — something to differentiate it from a scrap-book. If the unity is not at once apparent on the surface, or in the Table of Contents, it might be well to give a hint of it — and that preface or introduction would be in the nature of a point of view. Mine ranges from an ox to a lyric, and from Kipling's symbolism to a schoolboy's grammar: and so there would seem to be flagrant need of some henlike quillwork to cover the whole

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and warm it together. That's your side of the case, — and I don't know but you are right.

On the other hand, I wrote about an ox, Bully, for the "Atlantic Monthly" because I wanted to write about him in particular at that time. I was n't writing a book — I was thinking about the ox and the article or essay about him. It was the same with the other things as they came along. As to "Kubla Khan," I wanted to put that in the magazine, also — and could n't. But they are things which interested me and upon which I felt talkative : so then I cast about and wanted you to put it in a book. I was n't, when I started out with Bully, engaged in writing a Unity. I had no theory of Unity which I set up and then started to write a book around. I was writing about Things.

They now add up into a book, — I take the book up and begin to consider the *Unity* on account of which they seem to fit together, and which seems necessary to point out. Looking the book over as if some one else wrote it, with a sharp eye for Unity, I find that the whole business is in the first person singular — except "Kubla Khan." Because of the form, it has somewhat the effect

of autobiography, in glimpses and snatches; and while I might attempt to explain and analyze this, the fact of the matter is that it was in the nature of the thing, — the nature of the subject, or of my introduction to it, or of my bent in writing, etc. I think, despite the look of the Table of Contents, that there is a similarity between them, — but certainly not in the titles, — and so it (the Unity) must be in the flavor, or the way of looking at things in general, or what is variously called "style" in more or less deep meaning. Style with me is simply an effort to tell the truth — which includes the problem of making it *arrive.*

Well, now that I have succeeded in getting it printed (these things) I — to tell the truth about the matter — don't give a dink about the Unity. It is the publisher who is concerned about that, — and so, from that point of view, I ought to be concerned about it too. But the moment I look this Unity business in the face, I am up against the problem of talking about ME. I don't mind talking about what I did, still less what I *think* upon any subject whatever, — but when it comes to talking about myself, I go on strike. Right

there I would want to explain myself fully and undertake a lot of literary essays — which these are not. That is, rather shortly, what I mean by "Won't do it."

CHARLES D. STEWART.

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I

CHICAGO SPIDERS

CHICAGO SPIDERS

BEING a spider in Chicago is a very unsatisfactory vocation. In the evening, when it is time to take down the old web and put up the new, a spider will gather a section into a ball or skein that is positively black, and kick it out behind him into the street below as if he were disgusted with such a grimy mess. It is so bulky with dirt that a small piece of web makes a large armful for him. And after the new one has been spread for an hour or two, its sticky filaments are so coated with particles of atmosphere that it will hardly catch anything else. Only by going through a sort of jumping-jack performance can a Chicago spider manage to make a fly stick.

Whether a country spider, with a whole garden fence at his disposal, takes down his old web, I do not know, though it would seem that there he could, by merely moving a foot or two, save himself all the work; but in Chicago, where cor-

ner locations are the most valuable, — especially the corners of windows where house flies long to enter, — and where each corner is preëmpted by a particular spider, the taking down of the old web is necessary to the greatest daily profit. It pays better than to move.

A Chicago spider can take down a web and put up another in about twenty minutes — and from this I am anxious to have the reader infer that the daily presence of a great number of them does not mean a neglected window. If any one thinks his household guiltless in this regard, let him observe his own window closely. I dare say he will find this story sumptuously illustrated.

Before I was laid on a bed by a window and tied down as firmly as any Gulliver by Chicago pygmies, most of whom belonged to the tribe of Typhus, I would have considered it poor employment for any man to enter into the affairs of creatures so much smaller than himself. But they did shrewd things before my eyes every day; and when I began to understand, I became interested; and thus, for three weeks, I found myself bound out to the trade.

It was the jumping-jack trick that I first dis-

covered and appreciated. The spider, sitting patiently at the focus of his elastic wheel, with all legs on the lines, is in telegraphic communication with every part of it; and now let a fly so much as flutter a filament, and the spider jumps up and down as if he were trying to shake the whole structure from its moorings. This bounces the fly till he has his feet solidly on the line, and perhaps tangled in other lines. After taking this precaution, the spider, if he has been lucky, runs out and ties up his victim in the usual bundle, ready to carry. He does up a fly like a turkey trussed and ready for the table.

To one who has had a motionless and half-forgotten spider in his eye for an hour or so, this sudden exhibition of vigor in jumping up and down is startling. He does it as if he were in a great fit of temper. From this practice it is evident that he cannot depend upon the web alone to catch the prey, and hold it long enough for him to get out to it. The web is not merely a stationary snare, like a tree with birdlime on it, but a contrivance that may be operated personally by the spider as a trap. The structure, being elastic, works up and down when he jumps, so that each row of lines

traverses at least the distance between it and the next row of lines. Thus, despite the open spaces between them, he is virtually in possession of the whole plane of space, for anything with air-disturbing wings can hardly pass through it without sending in an alarm and being caught. All spiders, I suppose, know this trick of the trade; but a Chicago spider must stick to his post and practice it in every case. If he did not, his daily catch would be all soot and no flies.

The same spiders did not occupy the window throughout the three weeks; but with the exception of one red spider who came along and seemed very doubtful about setting to work, they were all of one kind, big and little. This auburn-hued spider was more slender and shapely — not so fat and commercial-looking as the others. There were little spiders who spun little webs of such fineness that they were visible only when the sun fell just right on the glinting new gossamer; and for over a week a very big fellow, with a yellow hieroglyph on him like gold bullion on the back of a priest, held sway in webs a foot across. He sat with his back toward the room, whereas most of them made a practice of keeping their under sides

toward the window. In this, there seems to be a difference in practice; but all of them sit upside-down — head-downwards — invariably.

I discovered, to my own satisfaction at least, why a spider sits in his web upside-down. A spider has eight legs, besides a very short pair in front which are more like mandibles; but in truth a spider's legs are all fingers, and he needs as many as possible to handle his prey. Were he to support himself right-side-up in biting a victim, it would require four hind legs merely to hold him in that position, for he would have to grasp more than one thread; but he can hang head-downwards with only the one hind pair of legs, and have all the rest free to handle the prey before him. His hind pair of legs extend almost straight behind him for the purpose of being his sole support in such cases; and because he is built in this way, in order to cope successfully with other insects, the upside-down attitude is his easiest way of staying on watch. It is his most restful position.

One of the big spiders was one day surprised by a chrysalis that fell down from some place into his web. It turned out to be a very windfall

of fortune, for the luscious larva was quite to his taste. At least, he examined it thoroughly, and kept it, as if he were satisfied with what he found inside of the cocoon. It was almost as long as himself, and he showed great dexterity in turning it about and examining it in all positions with his six free legs, holding it before him as he hung head-downwards. A spider can handle himself in all positions with equal facility, and when he is surprised he will suddenly turn head-upward as he surveys the web, and keep that position for a while. But when all is quiet on the Potomac, he turns upside-down again and takes his ease.

I read in a book review that the male spider is said to dance in order to please his inamorata. I have seen such a performance, and would describe it as follows. One of the spiders retreats backward an inch or two from the other; he pauses there a moment and advances; and, when the two are face to face, they go through certain antics, both of them, with their front legs. It is exactly as if one were to interlock his fingers loosely and then twiddle them. After this twiddling of legs, the visitor backs up, pauses, and comes forward again; and they will keep up this performance for quite

a while. Whether this is flirtation I do not know; much less do I understand the code. And whether it is dancing or not depends upon — the figure of speech.

These spiders, according to the dictionary, are geometrical or garden spiders; but the ones with whom I was personally acquainted saw nothing more verdant than a rubber plant and one smoke-blasted tree. This ailing tree was the only survivor in those parts, and so its twiggery had to accommodate the sparrows of a large territory every evening; it was little more than a community perch or convention tree, and it had more sparrows on it than leaves. Regularly they would come home to Bedlam at night, and they would seem much excited over the return to nature. As to the spiders, they were garden spiders in the sense that Chicago is the Garden City.

Before proceeding further, I must explain that this comment on the secrets of the craft is merely by way of introducing to the reader a particular spider who had an admirable adventure. I shall come to him later on. I should confess that I do not know spiders anatomically or microscopically, but only personally: I know only that about a

spider which he knows himself, namely, his trade. This, I think, is worth describing, step by step.

It will be best to take a Chicago spider who is building in the upper corner of a window, for here is a set of conditions which are uniform throughout the country, and which every one is familiar with. The spider, having found this unoccupied place, walks on the window frame away from the corner and stops at the right distance for the size of his web, which depends upon the size of the spider. The corner of the window frame offers the foundation, or outline, for two sides of his web; but he must himself complete the circumference within which to spread his work. Now, a line stretched from where he stands, on the top frame, to a point on the side frame, will give him a triangle; and he must project this line transversely through the air.

This is easily done. Pressing the end of the line to the window frame, he takes hold of it with one hind leg and runs along with it to the corner, spinning it out as he goes; and he holds the line out with his hind leg like a boy flying a kite. He must hold it well out and keep it taut, for it must not touch the wood anywhere along its

length. Having reached the corner, he turns and runs down the side frame; and now it is as if the kite were going up in the air. As he runs downward from the corner, paying out the line, it opens, fanwise, from the upper frame; and when it has formed the triangle he stops and fastens that end.

This is to be his main cable which must, on that side, support the ends of all the lines. And these inner lines are to be stretched with considerable tension. For such a heavy strain the single strand is not enough, so he now runs back and forth along its length and keeps paying out till he has augmented it with several plies of filament — a cable. It is now strong enough, but as the tension on it is to be sidewise, it is not rigid enough; it would bow inwards as he stretched the web from it, and so it needs a few small guy-lines, or stays, to brace it. These stays he fastens farther out on the wood, or to points on the glass itself. He could, in fact, so far as his abilities are concerned, fasten every line of his web to the glass; but the wind would blow it against the pane and interfere with its workings. Therefore he makes the cable to stretch it to, a little distance from the window.

The outline or foundation is now done. Inside this triangular circumference he has now to make the spokes of his wheel before stretching upon them the circular lines. In like manner as he put up the main cable, he runs a single line across this triangular space, about the middle of it. Having this line stretched, he climbs to the middle of it and there stops, for this is to be the centre of his wheel. In stretching this diametrical line he has really made two spokes at one operation; but now he must pursue a different method, making one spoke at a time. If he were to try to keep up this way of making two spokes at a time, fastening a line at one side and running around the circumference to the opposite side to fasten it there, his line would become entangled with the one stretched before; it would stick, and he could not raise the new line to the middle of the other where it ought to cross. Therefore he must now work from the middle outwards, stretching one spoke at a time. He fastens the end of the spoke he is about to spin to the middle of this diametrical line, takes this new line in his hind leg in order to hold it free of the other as he climbs it, and thus he gets the spoke to

the window frame. Then he proceeds with it along the window frame a short distance, the second line opening out, fanwise, from the first; and when it has opened to the proper angle he fastens it down to the wood. He then descends the new one and repeats the operation; and so he keeps on, always using the one he stretched last to return upon and bring out another, and always holding the new line clear and taut as he pays it out, exactly like a boy flying a kite. It must not touch and tangle. And, like the boy, he runs along at a good gait as if he had no time to lose.

By this simple method, the spokes are all put in; and it is very easy according to his system. It is worth considering, however, that he is always very fortunate in coming out so nearly uniform in the spacing of his spokes, — and this in an irregular triangle upon which the spokes must fall at all sorts of distances in order to be equally spaced. He seems to be an expert in division. But it is not the *outside* of his space that he can measure off in an automatic way, for there the distances are not uniform. I think he must accomplish it all by watching the new line open fanwise

from the middle, and so I regard him as a sort of surveyor with a good eye for angles.

The wheel part is now done, and he has to weave on it the circling strands. He takes his place at the middle of the wheel, and keeping his head always toward the centre, he steps sidewise from spoke to spoke, fastening the thread to a spoke, drawing it across to the next one at the right tension, dabbing it down to fasten it, and so on, round and round. And he works with considerable speed.

But this mode of operation cannot be kept up to the end. When he has worked out a short distance from the centre, the radiating spokes are too far apart for him to straddle across. Here he changes the method. Instead of straddling across, he goes out on a single spoke, fastens his thread to it, comes in and crosses to the next spoke by means of the line that he stretched on his last trip around. He then goes out on the next spoke, and fastens it, — and he always handles it with his leg, at the moment he sticks it fast, so that there is no surplus spun out, and it has the right tension. Thus he continues till his wheel is big enough, always using his last circle as a bridge

from spoke to spoke as he adds the next surrounding circle. This part, when done, is really a spiral.

The garden spider, in making a web that fulfills the ideal, puts in this spiral I have just described with the lines very far apart — very open. He then starts at the circumference and fills it in finer, working round and round toward the middle. This first spiral may be considered his scaffold. As we see, it was constructed under certain drawbacks; but now that he has so much put in coarsely, he can walk round and round with more footing, and work with less trouble.

When the web seems finished, one thing yet remains to be done. Where the spokes have each been fastened to the centre, there is a mass of fibre, the tag-ends of the whole job, which would be in his way as he sat in the middle of the web. He takes this out neatly, leaving a hole. Had he taken this out before the spiral was put on, the whole wheel would, of course, have collapsed. He throws the fibre into the street below, and takes his place over the hole with his legs holding the lines around him; and now it is time for Providence to send a fly.

The spider does his work behind his back, as it were; he cannot see what he is doing; and yet in certain of his operations he must make strokes that are instantly accurate and "to the point." This would call for some miraculous knowledge of location — which he has not; and his way of meeting the problem is interesting. In that division of his work, which consists in stretching the cable and spokes, his problem is simple; it is merely the fastening of sticky threads to the window frame, a surface which is firm and flat. As it is flat, he does not need to strike a fine particular point on it; and as it is perfectly stable, he simply presses the line down firmly behind him as it comes from his spinneret. But in stretching the spiral from spoke to spoke of the web itself, he must strike a certain point on his line against a particular point on the web, in order to have the right tension; he must unite them firmly at that point and do it at a dab. It is a fine point to find; and to do such work behind him, against a yielding, air-blown filament, is quite a different matter from pressing his line to a flat firm surface. He proceeds, accordingly, on the same principle, but takes it another way about. Instead of merely

dabbing down the line he is spinning, he seizes with a hind leg the line *to which* he wishes to make a fastening and presses that against a particular part of *himself;* that is, he raises the spoke and touches it firmly to the point on his body where the new line is spinning out. Thus the spiral is put in. The whole extraneous difficulty is transmuted into a mere matter of self-knowledge — like finding one's mouth in the dark.

During this part of the work he does not need to use one leg to prevent entanglement, the parallel spans being shorter and more widely separate from the beginning; and it is lucky for him that he can now spare that member, for in the operations of putting in the spiral his multitude of legs are busy indeed. One is seizing the spoke and dabbing it to his spinneret; one is pressing on the new-spun line, as if to regulate the tension; the others are stepping about lively in order to accommodate his body to the advancing work — and altogether it is as rapid and unobservable as the flight of knitting-needles. But once it is caught by the eye, the mystery of his accuracy is small, and its ingenuity is great. But the very fact that he has to descend to mere ingenuity, in lieu of instinct,

which can perform miracles, presents him to us as a humble spinner, and human. I think it is a person of little promise who can look through his web and not find that this display of window-work, spread out between us and the universe, is a sort of trap for the mind, tending to keep it within bounds.

The large spiders, so far as I have observed, are the most careless workmen. In some of their webs the geometrical design could hardly be perceived were it not for the radiating spokes; and these are not straight, but drawn to this side and that by the connecting lines. And these lines, that ought to be the spiral, have been put in any way at all, as if one at a time, here and there; and moreover they have been put in loosely and then tightened to the spoke with other little guy-lines, so that they have the shape of a Y. The web seems to be not only patched, but all patchwork from the start. It has the wheel shape in it, however, and the same principles are employed throughout; in fact, there is more individuality and a greater display of mechanical science in such a web than in one that conforms to the ideal. It takes a better mechanic to patch a job than to

follow specifications to a successful conclusion. The little spiders do the most perfect work, strikingly geometrical, with the lines of the spiral exactly parallel. I once picked from a bush a withered leaf that had curled up at the end, and in this space, smaller in extent than a quarter of a dollar, was a spider's web perfect in every detail.

Other webs would differ from this window-web; but the difference would not be in the web proper so much as in the outrigging or foundation for it. In truth, the most interesting part of a spider's work is not in the geometrical part that excites our first wonder, but in his ways of devising the irregular circumference, the making use of vantage points, the solving of problems peculiar to each set of surroundings. Here is individual work, separate planning to suit each case, the application of principles rather than automatic and uniform procedure — the work of a mechanic.

The opportunities for studying nature in a "flat" are growing every day. The renaissance of colonial architecture, with the small window panes, allows the spiders to cultivate the whole field of glass. A spider soon learns all about glass; a fly never. The spider works with it familiarly;

he even uses its surface to moor the stays of his cable; but the fly buzzes and butts his head against it, utterly unable to learn that the invisible can have existence. The invention of glass was a god-send to spiders, and a sorry thing for flies.

There is much more to the trade of building a web, but so technical in detail that it would have to be considered at much length in order to arrive at the ultimate mechanical reasons (something I have yet to see done in nature study). A thing superficially perceived or half explained might as well not be explained at all. Much "nature study" consists in these mere semblances of explanations — incomplete perceptions. The most profitable work in this line, I think, would be the work of the skilled mechanic, rather than the poetic "nature student" or the mere microscopic observer; for this shrewd stealing of secrets, both by observation and basic reasoning, has been his lifelong attitude in filching his own trade from others, as well as from nature. And as to the writing of it, the simple and luminous expression of such things calls for the very highest and completest set of mental faculties. Contrary to the popular notion, the creation of so-called "atmospheric" impression in litera-

ture is much easier, and of a lower order of intellect, than the conveying in familiar words exactly what was done, and why. This also takes imagination.

But, as I have said, it was not my intention, in writing this, to record all that I learned of the trade so far as I advanced, but rather to make public a tragi-comedy that was enacted in spider life. To recount all that I observed would be robbing the reader of his privilege of discovering things for himself, — even denying him the right to look out of his own window, — which is one of the things I protest against. I have told so much because it was necessary thus to introduce, in their proper persons, the two characters of the play.

It was drawing on toward evening. The day had been — simply another day: a wilderness of roofs in a soft-coal mist, a turbid patch of sky, and the people below moving monotonously past like cattle in a canyon. The street near by became darker with the stream of people hurrying home from store and factory; Chicago had let out. The worn-out tree was receiving back the sparrows, and every twig was a perch. I was tired of all this; there was nothing interesting about it;

and so from trying to see something *out* of the window I turned again to look *at* it, for it was time for the spiders to go to work.

The corner nearest me, which had to be renovated of its dusty and damaged web, belonged to a medium-sized spider; and promptly he came forth to the work. Another corner was held — I cannot say occupied — by a set of legs on a very old web. A spider, with all his skill in taking down a web, moves away and leaves his dirt behind him. Not only this, but he has a habit, when he has his new set of legs, of leaving the old ones on the web; and there they remain, occupying the position that he last held. They do not come off him singly, but in a complete set, like a truck that has been removed from a car. And it is wonderful how long a web will withstand the weather and bear this grisly semblance of a spider with each leg set on a line. This particular set of sere and yellowish legs danced in every breeze, and seemed even more active than when they had a spider to operate them. I often wished that some enterprising spider would come along and take it all down; but none ever did. From watching to see whether this would happen, I turned my

attention to the medium-sized spider as he cleared his space. Finally, he had his old web all down and disposed of; and the new one was put up with "neatness and dispatch."

When the web was seemingly done, the spider spent a little while on the window frame among his guy-lines — possibly making things still more taut. There now appeared suddenly on the top of the frame, at the opposite corner of the web, a big able-bodied spider. He was much larger than the other — let us call them David and Goliath. He stopped short at the edge of the web as if pausing to look across at the owner and make up his mind. The other spider stopped work suddenly, as if looking back at him. I immediately suspected that here was a situation, and so I watched closely; there seemed to be spider-thinking going on. The big spider stepped deliberately on the web, and then, with a sudden dash, went out on it. He had no more than reached the middle when he was snapped back to where he came from, and thrown against the upper frame of the window as if he had been shot from a rubber sling — and the web was gone. In that instant, the smaller spider had cut the main cable.

David's elastic sling had not only thrown Goliath back where he belonged, but had knocked him against the frame and slapped him in the face for his impudence.

The big spider, we can only conclude, meant harm — either robbery or bodily injury — and the other spider knew it. But this does not explain what we like always to see in nature — an object in everything. What was the beneficent object? It was not a provision on the part of instinct to enable the spider to save its web from the robber, for the web was utterly sacrificed. As to the loss of property, the little spider might just as well have run away and let the big one have it. And as to the little spider saving its life, it might as well have run at once, for a spider can pursue another anywhere, even if there is no web. To me it seemed to be a pure case of "You won't get the best of me." Does Nature, in her wise regard for the needs of all her creatures, make provision for the satisfaction of transcendental justice?

It looked like an original act of thought — the presence of mind of a good mechanic who understands his machine. I have often wondered,

on the theory that it might have been a way of saving the smaller spider's life, whether the big spider was injured; and if the smaller spider had simply run away and left his web, would not the other have been satisfied with it, and not bothered to pursue him? Why this provision of instinct?

I am sorry to say that I was not myself in a condition to look into the physical state of Goliath and see whether he was disabled. I was so taken up with the tragi-comic view, the human phase of it, that I did not even think of these other things. In fact, I was so delighted over the victory that, weak as I was, and bound down as by cords made of my own tendons, I raised myself up and inwardly exclaimed — *Foiled!*

Spiders are interesting companions — under conditions. And the outcome of all one's observations is finally a question — Is it God that is doing these things, or is it a spider?

II

THE STORY OF BULLY

THE STORY OF BULLY

The World 's my book, with two leaves spread,
One under foot — one overhead ;
The text runs true to each man's need ;
Let him who will go forth and read.

THAN this black Bully, I never knew an ox that was an abler near wheeler — never a one that could sit back with such bull-dogged determination and put the brakes on a string of wild, wrong-headed Texas steers. One would not think there could be so much will-power in a mortal body.

He was none of your gaunt, ungainly, ridge-back cattle; he lived comfortably in a roomy physique, and had legs like posts at the four corners of himself. His neck was finely wrinkled and fissured with extra pelt, as if Nature had calculated on letting out the tucks, not knowing how big he might grow. He had a wealth of swinging dewlap that swept the flowers as he passed; it

looked as if he were growing sole leather as a by-product, an extraneous animal fruit of himself. In fact, for a steer, he was generously endowed with everything bovine; he looked the bull *en bon point.* Nature had put on his horns the rings of four summers.

With all his bench-legged solidity, he was not clumsy: he was perfectly muscled from the end of his calfish nose to the tassel of his lion-like, tapering tail. His seat of power seemed to be in his built-up neck; and it was because of this gristly mass of neck that he was called Bully; for even though he was a steer he had the mien and make of a sire of the herd. From that neck his ship-shape lines spread out expansively to his four-stomach middle, slid off over neat loins, and dwindled away in his tail. Withal he was wise and Juno-eyed — and guileless as a calf.

His hair lay sleek and short, — he was largely Spanish, — and that was a great satisfaction to me. I have seen the dust fly out of his yoke-mate, Brig, in a way that made me think I was beating a carpet, and so it was a comfort to observe that I had one ox that cleaned himself automatically and kept an ebon smoothness. For bovine no-

bility, general bull-comeliness, he would have stood out among a herd — but that might be said of any steer that is selected for a near wheeler.

On evenings when we had been breaking prairie far from home, and I was tired sitting on the iron seat, I would mount him and go home ox-back. Or I would go out in the morning and mount him *en pasture*, bring him home to the plough, and thence proceed leisurely across the open to the farm we were making. It is different from riding a broncho — less up and down and more round and round. It is, in truth, the nearest approach to motion in all directions at once. At every step of the rolling, weltering gait, your leg is softly compressed between his swinging paunch and that of his partner; thus you go along for miles, knee-deep in ox. This feeling of the muscular labor of a ponderous bull makes it less like riding than like transportation; like sitting atop a load of life.

He had a barrel-like body and a platform of a back; and I have thought, at such times, that he would have been fit for the cavalry — or rather the bullery — of an African king. Certain of the Ethiopian potentates use the bull in battle; and I am sure that if he had ever tried this particular bayo-

neted steed, old Mushwush would not have parted with him for anything. For cavalry purposes he would have had to use Bully (after the African practice) with a cincture, using a girth to ride bareback. A horse has his pelt fairly well fastened to him, so that if you stick to his hide you stay on the horse; but a bull is loosely clothed in his. Therefore the results are entirely different. Hence the African practice; and it is my opinion that to have used Bully with perfect success in the cavalry it would have been necessary to use two cinctures — a girth fore and aft — to belt his hide on.

However, for straight traveling, without much evolution, a person who was a little used to ox-equitation found him a very good rocking-chair. A woman, I think, could have made out on him by sitting far forward and taking hold of a horn; but a man was more fit for him, being a sort of clothes-pin to his loose mantle.

The walnut beam of his yoke came down to Texas with some settler from the North; and it was carved with Yankee care. When I scraped down its ancient surface to the wine-colored wood, my near wheeler and his mate looked handsome

in it. It was a well-modeled yoke, too; the rest of them labored against mere hacked-out timbers. Jeff Benson (the Texan to whom he previously belonged) had ornamented the yoke, in front of the eye-bolt, with a Lone Star of brass-headed tacks; and the ends of it were further decorated with tin tobacco tags by the same artist. It was a distinctive yoke, a fit recognition of his superiority; and it sat upon his neck as so much jewelry from which depended the trifle of a log chain.

This mention of Jeff reminds me of a tug of war that Bully was engaged in by the man who trained him — for it was Jeff that caught him wild and made an ox of him. Jeff was rather argumentative in a dry way, and loyal to his own "string" — he was a tall, wiry, typical Texan, which is possibly sufficient description. He had, I might add, a slight brisket under his chin (like an ox), he chewed the cud, and spat, and Nature in her wisdom had gifted him with big hearty eloquence in certain words that oxen consider their favorite epithets. He was one of the race that seems to have been specially provided to "bust" the soil and blaze the way for culture.

Jeff, being bound with his string for a certain

location on the prairie designated by four surveyors' stakes, — the boundaries of the farm he was to make, — came past the Colonel's place where Bill Pierce was putting on an addition of a few acres.

"Bet you he can."

"Bet you he can't."

"Bet you a dollar *and* a quarter he can."

The point was, whether Jeff's wheeler or Bill's wheeler could hold back the hardest. A bull, for various reasons, can and will pull still more in a contrary direction than he can or will pull forward. It is due to peculiarities of his structure, and to mechanical reasons incident to his sitting back on all fours; and furthermore, and not a bit less, to his natural disposition. The full extent of his strength and will-power can only be seen when he chooses to make himself a Sitting Bull. And so it came to the test. First it was to be seen whether Jeff, with his whip and other persuasion, could make Pierce's oxen drag Pierce's wheelers. Then Jeff's wheelers were to be put in their place and show whether they could hold back the same string, against Pierce's efforts.

Pierce had a fairly well-broken off wheeler, but

his main dependence, as is usual, was the near wheeler, one Scot by name. Although I had a partiality for Bully, I must say that Scot was a very good ox — as worthy a foe as Bully could have met. Of the wheelers in that particular neighborhood, Scot had the reputation of being the determinedest. His indurated bull neck was worn bare up to the roots of his horns with his dutiful *wo*ing. He was a tawny, tousled, roughish sort of a Carlyle of an ox; his hair seemed to be as perverse as himself. He had a horn that was not quite straight on his head — but it was becoming and looked well on him as being the natural offshoot of a perverse brain. But it is no wonder he was stubborn. Having had to do much breaking in tough wire-grass, where a long and powerful string of raw, newly recruited cattle was needed, he had been used to hard fighting to bring them to a standstill at the end of every furrow. In this educated function of holding back with such odds against him he had learned that he had to pitch in mightily or be dragged; and this experience had made him a live dog. To see this Texas steer throw himself back with his mind made up, and stick to the task even when he was being pulled

along stiff-legged, would be a revelation to any one whose notions of cattle are based on the cow in ordinary. He was none of your meek and gentle kine. Scot was older at the business than Bully, but Jeff did not care for that; he unhooked his cattle, took out his wheelers, and renewed the challenge.

I have long thought that I ought to put this tug of war fully on record, as something having a basic bearing upon the winning of our new country, — something quite universal and fundamental and already passed unrecorded into the *artes perditæ*, — especially as it would have to be done by one who has first-hand experience. But it is a delicate task to undertake, and I do not even know how to make excuse. But possibly the world will understand after I have told more about the ways of Bully. I have heard some very good deep-sea swearing; but, as history would show, the art of ox-driving has required the world's most eminent profanists. It cannot *all* be told. But it all had to be done, even in Puritan New England; and I doubt if there is a Yankee left who could put a fid in a chain.

Suffice it to say that Bill took the bet; Jeff

examined his cracker and stood off at good lash-length from the string; Bill stood at the left rear corner of the outfit to attend to his wheeler's state of mind, and then the contest began. Jeff's whip uncoiled its serpentine length and hit vacant space so hard that it fractured the atmosphere; the string started to move. Bill said "Wo!" and Scot squatted. The yoke slid up behind his ears; he threw up his head and caught the beam at the base of his horns, and he laid back "for keeps," his stout legs braced and set. Jeff plied his art on the cattle ahead; Bill commanded his ox to "wo," and the chain stood stiff as a crowbar.

At each outburst from Jeff the chain wavered forward, and still harder Scot held back, twelve hundred pounds of solid resolution. He balked like a bull-dog on the chain. Sometimes it would seem that Jeff had him coming — but Scot would *not*. Always, with some new summoning of will-power, some inward do or die, he would get a hold with his hoofs and bring them all to mere dead endeavor. But presently he began to slip, — ten feet — twenty feet, — still struggling for a chance to come back again with all fours set. He nearly did it; and then there seemed to blow up a storm

of language. Jeff's eloquence rolled forth like thunder, and played along his length of leather lightning; it created havoc on the backs of the cattle like a summer storm on a shingle roof. Scot fought like mad. He went along a little farther, partly dragged and partly walking stiff-legged as he struggled to come back on his haunches; and Jeff kept driving oxen with a crack at every outburst. Scot came forward a step at a time and a slide at a time till he had been brought a hundred feet or more. Jeff shut himself off and smiled peacefully; he caught the cracker in his hand and looked perfectly content and harmless.

"Ye can't do *that* — not with my Bully," he said.

Bully was more leisurely (all "staggy" steers are) in his ways of going at things. He lagged slightly in his progress, and as the beam slid up his neck he threw his head up slightly in the usual way and inclined ponderously backward for the tug of war. He always held his head slightly sidewise, for some reason, catching the beam on only one horn; and he looked forth at you with the one-eyed unconcern of a Cyclops in the confidence of his power. While Bill did his best

ahead, Jeff kept addressing his own ox in a subdued and private tone of "Wo, Bully." You have to address a near wheeler personally if you want him to do his best.

Despite all the power the cattle were exerting, there was no motion to show it. There were only the yokes sunk deeper in their worn, scrawny necks, the horizontal chain, and the fixed position of the sitting bull. Jeff's feelings, to judge by his looks, went up and down like a thermometer as the chain began to show signs of going forward or back. He stood with bent knees and watched; and as Bill broke forth worse than ever, he laid one hand on his ox and said very confidentially, "Wo-o-o-o, Bully." Suddenly (and to Jeff it must have sounded like the rending and tearing of Destiny) Bully got one leg out of the furrow where he was braced, and the wire-grass went ripping through the cleft of his hoof. They were dragging the whole mettlesome mass of him. They seemed to have him overcome, despite the mechanical brace of his short, thick legs. But only for a few feet; he gave his head an impatient toss, planted himself anew, and came back like the everlasting buttress of his bull determination. The

harassed cattle were now straining forward as if they would choke themselves on the bows; they took steps without advancing; they veered from side to side as if the leaders were trying for an easier opening through the atmosphere. Bill threw out his lithe bull-whip and started to pull out of there; they made Bully plough a furrow with each of his four hoofs. Jeff put his whipstock in front of the wheeler's nose and spoke to him personally — and again Bully *wo*ed. This time he brought his hoof back into the furrow, got all fours rooted into the upturned sward, and set back as in a lock-jaw of his whole physique. And there he stuck. His whole welterweight of ox was now in action, and he was not to be budged. Jeff let the string pull against Irresistible Force for a while longer, not to have any argument about it; and then he claimed the victory. He had won. Of course there was a technical argument about this and that point of the art; and it kept up till Jeff was so far on his way again that his voice would not carry back.

This victory became part of Bully's pedigree; Jeff submitted it verbally to anybody who talked ox.

In common with other staggy, philosophic wheelers, Bully had another ability that surpasseth human wisdom. On dry, hot days, at three o'clock in the afternoon, he would suddenly "wo" on his own authority, and having brought them all to a stop he would drop in the furrow. Without any ceremony whatever, he would stop them and plump down on the prairie like a big frog in a pond. The idea of taking a rest seemed to strike him in the head with the force of a sledge-hammer and fell him to earth; and then he would deliberately start chewing the cud. When he did this you could not make any impression or have any influence with him till the appointed time had come. While you mauled his staunch carcass, or put your boot-heel into his strong ribs, or prodded him with the whipstock, he would ruminate in holy quiet, looking out upon the world with a mild and gentle eye. You might torture his body if you would; you could not affect his inner spirit. He had retired within himself for a season; he had duties with his digestion. In this posture he had a distended Falstaffian paunch and an air according: "Shall I not take mine ease in mine furrow?" He seemed to have taken in

his feelings where they would be out of harm's way; and I have thought at times that he might be one of those who believe in faith. It was strange — but it must be remembered that a much-used ox is inured to hard trials and abuse.

I must say, however, that I seldom disagreed with him. How could any one differ with him — to his face? His eyes were murkily blue; and looking into his honest face I could only wonder how it was, anyway, that a black Spanish bull could see his way to be so obliging. He was indeed innocent to be so unsophisticated as to his great strength; his obedience was a flattery. You could buy his affection for a mere corn-nubbin, which he would grind in his mill of a mouth, — husk, kernel, and cob; and all the time he would regard things with a doe-like eye and the tears standing out on his nose. Jeff, when he had him, was seldom disgruntled by this habit; he regarded it as a mark of brains in the steer; and being himself a philosopher, he would take a chew, following the wheeler's example, and loaf on the seat. When the time was fulfilled, Bully would arise voluntarily, and then he would be good for any amount of balk and battle. I think it would

have gone hard with any other ox that tried to do that. But Bully had to have his sacred rest; and it is never good policy to have a falling out with your wheeler.

In a cold blow — a dry norther — an ox is the best of all walking companions. A dry norther is a sunny, sweaty day in Texas, and then a change that makes you feel as if somebody had suddenly stepped into the north and left the door open. It remains clear and sunny; the cold is entirely in the wind; and so, on the south side of anything, it is as warm as ever. You can take your choice of climate; a walk around a haystack is like circumnavigating the globe. It usually catches you when you are out on the shelterless prairie, with your coat (if you have one) at the other end of a long furrow; and with the sweat upon you, you shiver and chatter. Here is where you take to the lee-side of your wheeler and walk along with him, stooping down in complete refuge from the cold. I have often been glad that an ox is not a long-legged, high-up horse that the wind can blow through. He is not only a windbreak, but a whole broadside of animal warmth; he is both cosiness and company; he is a perfect

breastwork as you stalk against Boreas with your hand resting on his tough neck or grasping his warm horn. Nowhere, in mere walled warmth or kitchen comfort, is there this same sense of refuge and shelter — of contrast between the warmth within and the cold without; it contains the secret of human gratitude.

And here, by way of apology, I must remark that this closeness of mine to the wheeler — this unavoidable relation of "brother to the ox" — must be my excuse for writing in this vein of bestial intimacy. Even now I can feel the cold wind whisking past the edge of the dewlap that hung down like a thick curtain — his *portière* if you please. For half a day at a time I have gone back and forth hugging Bully, cold on the up furrow and warm on the down, till finally the sun, all too slowly, went down like a big red wafer and set its seal upon the day.

More and more every year we are becoming a nation of travelers. To those who would travel for both pleasure and profit I can say a good word for ploughing. It recommends itself to people in whatever circumstances, and for deeply founded reasons. When a man travels for plea-

sure, he is likely to put himself at the task of enjoyment; when he is traveling to a destination, his journey is all a wait — his business with the landscape is to leave it behind; and I think it will be generally admitted that the culminating pleasure of a trip is in the arrival. Travels are more useful in the reminiscence, the fond memory, than in the actual experience. Now, in ploughing prairie with a sulky, you have the greatest of all human privileges, — to loaf at work; and your outfit comes at every step to the object of your going. Your journey is *all* arrival. It does not break in upon one's time at all; it exhilarates the cogitations like fishing or whittling; and by covering the ground so many times a man becomes thoughtful and thorough. It, more than anything else, makes thinking quite respectable, giving it that seeming remove from idleness that keeps the neighbors from talking; it cultivates the gift of remembering; it is altogether the best mode of travel.

In the choice of motive power, allow me to suggest the ox. The horse leans forward to pull, and even helps himself along by bobbing his head; he jerks a load out of a hard place by

plunging bodily against the collar, stopping and lunging again; he strains through a hard place and then starts suddenly forward at his release; he works himself into a lather; and you, if you are the right kind of a person, cannot help feeling for him and assisting him with inward stress and strain.

The ox does not bob a horn. He simply journeys, and the load goes along. When he comes to a tough place his pasterns do not bend down; he does not squat to pull; he does not pinch along on the toes of his shoes; he seldom blows, and he does not *know how* to sweat. He does not exert himself at a patch of woven soil and then hurry up when he is past it. The chain becomes stiffer and the yoke sits solider to his neck, and that is all; there is no sign of effort. The earth may grit its teeth and crunch as it swallows the plough, but the ox stalks on his way. With the share deep or shallow, or lifted entirely and hanging from the axle, — whether he is ploughing earth or air, — it makes no difference to him. His most ponderous task is still himself, and he heeds no incidentals.

He is out for a stroll; he does not allow work to interfere with the even tenor of his way. His

tendons are rigged to his outstanding rump-bones like so much spar and tackle, and he goes along by interior leverage; inside his old-woman hulk is the necessary engine-work, and he will neither go slower for this thing nor faster for that. There is much about him besides his disposition that is self-contained; he is the antithesis of the automobile. To ride on his back is a cure for indigestion; to ride behind him is a rest for the mind; a course of ox is an antidote for the ills of the times.

The steadiness of ox-ploughing is like sailing the prairie — out of sight of wood and water, and the earth curling up before your prow. A streak of wire-grass giving way bitterly beneath you gives the machine a tremor that imbues you with a sense of power — like an engine below decks. You are on a seat of the mighty. The yellow medlarks hurry along in your wake, keeping close to the opening furrow, steadfast as porpoises. The breeze, tempered by an ocean of flowering prairie, cocks the brim of your sombrero as you sail along, close to the wind. You sit on your seat and have a general disposition to let the world revolve.

I could, if I had a mind, write an excellent tribute to the ox, but all he needs is a record of facts. In the matter of primal motive power, it was he that founded this United States. In the two great transmigrations of our people westward, what jeopardy of life and limb has instantly rested on his sturdy neck — over the Alleghanies, over the Rockies, over the deathful desert, over the steep Sierras. In that great outpouring from New England that began about 1817, the ox, as usual, pulled forward and held back mightily on the mountain-side and laid down his bones for humanity. It was he who took our multitudinous ancestor from his old onion farm at Wethersfield and hauled him with his household to the Little Miami; and there he again assumed the rôle of prairie "buster," opening up the more generous bosom of nature. Again, in the days of '49, he took up the trail; and the history of that exodus was writ across the continent in the bones of oxen. Where is deeper reading than this — the bones of two or three yoke lying where they fell, and across their skeleton necks the heavy beams all strung along on a chain that would move a freight train. It stands for departed strength in a

fight to the finish. It means that the motive power ran out of water.

And having twice subdivided our people, cutting them almost entirely off from each other in the railroadless days, the ox did his part, along with horse and mule, to bring them together again. In 1863, on the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans, they began a memorable work. On the mountain-sides of California a thousand axes began to swing and there was a roaring of twenty-five saw-mills — a reaping and threshing of trees. The mountain groaned as it brought forth a railroad. The oxen strained down the mountain-side with logs for the ties; they kept the Chinamen supplied with rails and ties a hundred miles in advance.

Eighteen months after this, eighteen thousand men (mostly soldiers) arrived at Omaha with three thousand teams. They were starting the other end of the railroad; and the two halves would finally match the ends of their rails in Utah. Omaha was not connected by railroad with any other place; they could not haul supplies with locomotives; but Chicago was building toward it. Ahead of them was a stretch of a thousand miles with but one tree upon it; and then the plains again. The

teams brought material and locomotives from one to two hundred miles; they hauled the first locomotives to the starting-place and set them on their feet, as it were; and then ransacked six states and territories for more material. Right here the ox, as a long-haul machine, handed over his task to the locomotive forever. When the ox once has the machinery of "civilization" a-going he is needed no more; he is turned loose and forgotten. Nevertheless it was he that started the country, for he is the father of having and hauling. Tribute! The ox would not know what to make of such a thing. You may work him all day and then kick him out to graze all night; you may use him to found society and then kick him out of history. It is only left for us to try to realize the history of our country, even as seen through the medium of an animal. All hail, say I, the traction engine of our forefathers, the four-stomached, short-levered, grass-consuming, self-supporting ox.

For the purpose of the philosopher, the thinker, ox-driving is all it should be; it is equal to the fishing of the Clevelandean school of meditation. There is little interruption of one's train of thought; and while all such practices make call for their vices,

as lying and swearing, this needs only an idle vociferation that means little and comes as a matter of habit. And in the absence of line or bridle, there is naught to do but sit on the seat through long, slow furrows and keep on in one's way of thinking; there is none of the distraction of newspapers and books and lectures to keep one from thinking. Of the two primitive vocations, sheep-herding was the school of the prophet. But prairie-busting with a sulky plough is the natural chair of philosophy. The former is productive of the expansive, vacuous speculations, the iteration of the metaphysical, mystical Baa (sometimes spelled B. A.); but the latter, on the substantial iron seat, is the natural ruminator of definite human fact. When a man has long been in an attitude of thought, as if he were chewing the cud of things and digesting the world at leisure, the world, no doubt, has a right to ask him what he has thought. In view of this it has often seemed to me that some one should print the main points of the Bovine Philosophy. It includes the fundamental principles of things as seen by our American form of the Man with the Ho.

I shall begin by reminding the world of the

three stages of society — the pastoral, the agricultural, and the metropolitan, with especial reference to the United States. In the first stage, the cow-man and the sheep-man occupy the land in a nomadic way, and fight each other for what they call their rights, the cow-man objecting to the sheep because they crop grass too close, and cut it up with their sharp hoofs, thus spoiling the range. The cowboy is usually the aggressor, calling the other the Locust of the West; and in their fights the shepherd is often, to the surprise of many, the better man. He can fight with a fanatic frenzy peculiar to those who lead the life of the prophet.

The cowboy has been much misrepresented as a "character"; the genuine ones are seriously engaged in a trade which takes some time to learn, and it is a matter of business with them. Even more of a character than these men is the wild cow with her strange notions. Never having had occasion to think otherwise, she has an idea that man and horse are one animal — she believes in centaurs, and considers them proper. One time I dismounted in mid-range to my own legs, and was observed of a cow with a calf. She saw me do

it. Imagine her feelings to see her centaur divide itself into two parts and act like that! She immediately felt it her duty to kill off such a miscarriage of nature; and while she would run from me when I had four legs, she now ran at me. I clapped myself on my horse again just in time to avoid a horn; and she kept brandishing at me as I loped away. Such is the truly wild cow; she can run like a horse, and will fight upon occasion; and she can dodge a great deal easier than a horse. This is where the cowboy's hardest riding comes in, for it is his business to outdodge her — to drive her where he wishes her to be. In the quintessence of his calling he is the artful dodger of the plains; and from this comes the peculiarity of his long-stirrup riding, and all that makes his *ménage* really different from that of other horsemen.

In this stage of affairs there comes trailing over the horizon a Jeff Benson, his bull-whip in hand, his chain clanking against the tongue of his plough-carriage. He is "full of strange oaths"; he threatens his chain-gang at regular intervals; he cracks his whip explosively and then subsides on his seat as peaceful as any fisherman. A gentleman fly-caster cannot surpass him with the pole and line, for

though he casts no flies he can reach out and knock a fly *off* the ear of his near leader. He is come to make a farm for a German; and from this time the nomads must prepare themselves to civilize or move back. And what is the new ploughman driving? A string of those very cattle of the plains.

This first-of-all ploughman never appears with horses — always with cattle. This is in the nature of things. In the natural state of things, where there are as yet no corn and oats, the horse has stunted endurance but not muscular weight. As the draught horse is not only bred, but more truly made, out of corn and oats, he may be said to be created by the ox. The horse finds enough nourishment, strength, in the grass, to get himself and rider nimbly over it, and that is all that is needed of him. But the ox has four stomachs — a large, economic digestive plant. He can do the heavy work; and, because he has this thoroughness with what he eats, he can even lie down in the furrow at noon and eat the dinner he has brought along in his anatomical lunch-basket. He is no trouble, no expense, has more power; and he does not pull things to pieces with sudden jerks. And so he is

the one who does the work in the cornless, oatless state of affairs. Once he has done that tough task with the woven sward, conditions are changed, and he does not get the benefit of the series of crops he has started. The horse can keep the fallow field in order. The horse and the mule are preferred by a more adroit civilization; and so they come to eat *his* oats and be what he has made them. The streets of Chicago used to be filled with oxen. And where are the oxen now?

After the cowboy, the steer has a new master. For this new master, tied on behind, to make him go in any general direction is comparatively easy, seeing that the steer is still a dodger. Jeff can throw his whip out this side or that and regulate the course. But to *stop* a steer — that is the question! The cowboy has to trip him up with the lasso — throw him bodily. And to perform with him the parallel furrows of the field — that is still another question. Of course, if the ox were obedient he would stop when you told him to or pulled on a line. He would have to be thoroughly domesticated for that; and a new country can hardly halt civilization until a whole army of steers are somehow tamed and educated. Here

was a problem in animal psychology and practical politics for the ox-driver to solve. The solution of it is that a bull is "bull-headed," and can hold back powerfully; and so one animal that has been trained according to his nature will serve to handle a whole string.

Let us follow Jeff to work. He is ploughing "around" a field, putting a furrow down one side of a strip, crossing over and coming up the other side — and so on till his furrows meet in the middle and he is done. At the end of a furrow the wheeler holds back and makes himself an immovable pivot while the string is whipped around to cross over to the other furrow; and having arrived exactly at it the wheeler sits back again, and they are brought around accurately in the furrow. It is as if Jeff had a corner of his team firmly fastened until such time as the other end was pushed around just right. Without the sitting back of the wheeler, the whip could only accomplish an erratic scrawl with the plough. But with this restraint upon them the driver has time to do fine work. Thus in ox-driving, as in the other arts, success does not depend merely upon power, but also upon restraint.

It is the near or left wheeler that is the principal pivot, because in this country we plough around land to the left, not to the right as they do in England. We rebelled against their way of ploughing.

Thus your primitive team is founded with one word, "wo"; and that understood by but one ox. The ox-language now begins to grow. After hard experience the leaders begin to observe that when the word is spoken they are whipped around to the left; and then, anticipating the lash, they hurry to the left of their own accord. You take them at their word, and soon are addressing them direct. The word "wo," that formerly meant "stop," has now changed its meaning by usage and means "turn to the left."

You want your other wheeler to hold back also in emergency, and especially in turning to the right on a road; and for him to stop you have a word with a different vowel sound — "back." He knows that for his own. Finally the leaders learn that this means to turn to the right; and it comes to be their word for right. Thus it is that in a new part of the country, as in Texas a quarter of a century ago, there were "wo-back" oxen

— and the English language seemed to be contradicting itself. Leaders would hurry to the left or right at the words "wo" or "back." And then they learned their names — and a more general and vociferous "wo" would bring them all to a stop without the work of the wheeler. But you were ploughing from the first. Like all *earlier* languages, it was one of fewer words and more inflections.

Here "gee" and "haw" become of interest, together with the usual "wo" and "back," which we all understand the meaning of. To the dictionary, "gee" and "haw" — terms we inherited from England — are a mystery in their origin. It is said that possibly "gee" comes from "gee-off," meaning to go away, as the leaders do when they turn. But that is simply saying that "gee" means "gee" — hardly an explanation. The fact is that it came to us from times so remote that the origin is lost. Now the clue to this could never be had by watching "gee-haw" oxen, and for a very good reason. They are domesticated oxen; and domesticated oxen are broken one at a time by putting a young steer in a team and having him hauled about till he knows the whole vocab-

ulary, by force. It is simply handed down from ox to ox. The Texas team I knew understood ordinary English in a way different from its meaning; and the oxen of British lineage understand an English that we do not know the original meaning of at all.

This seems to explain the mystery of "gee" and "haw." Were they not the words addressed to the near wheelers away back in the beginnings of England? Does not "haw" sound like "ho," from the lantern-jawed dialect of an English yeoman? To a primitive team, as we have seen, "ho" would come to mean left, when used in their wild state. And as "haw" means left to everybody, I think it was originally only "ho." "Gee" might have been "gee-ap" — a corruption of "get up" as spoken to the near wheeler, just as you had them whipped around.

However, I do not know anything about it — I am simply trying to help the dictionary out of its difficulty, it not having had enough experience with oxen. I know nothing about oxen except in the primitive state, when nothing was inherited from former generations; and it is this I am telling about particularly. And such was the genesis

of bread and butter; for before the cow furnished butter she had to provide the bread to put it on. So endeth the Bovine Philosophy.

Except, of course, one were to view the matter curiously, poetically. On this matter one might write a volume of history and speculation. The ox, Johnsonian as he is, has never had his Boswell. Clothes have had their philosophy in Carlyle, but not the cow. No seer has arisen to expound the original labor-saver of this steel-armed, reciprocal, thrust-and-pull, wheel-filled whirl and grind of to-day.

Because of woman's first desire, man received the curse; and having her he had so much that he had to live on one spot. At that it was necessary for him to set to work; and he soon looked about for a way to put the work on other shoulders. Consider him sitting tired and discouraged by his first garden-patch, viewing the stream as so much power running to waste, and the beasts so much more muscular than he. And then his mighty resolve as he threw down the spade and decided to labor by proxy. See him as he views the woof and warp of the world while woman waits hopefully for him to produce society out of

the sod. Imagine him in his first inexperienced essays with the bull — what wrecks and wrestlings with the wild bull! I can see, myself, how the creatures ran away with him across a whole township of New Eden, and finally left him sitting in the hoof-marked muck of a distant watering-hole. There they had spilled him.

And whilst they stand peacefully and lave their bellies in the drink, he sits there and takes thought. He studies out the bull's little weaknesses; and lo, he conceives the idea of the wheeler. I can see the satisfaction come out on his face to sun itself. Straightway he comes forth with the full-rigged team; and he goes and performs the engraved field. He can back and tack and do all evolutions — with whip and wheeler it is like paddle and rudder; there is no runaway now. He can plough with never an idle scribble or scrawl on the face of nature. He thinks he has circumvented the curse; he has taken Bos from his meditations and become boss himself. This was the beginning of motive power; and when it came to hauling stone and timber for his first dam or windmill, then was the ox his true helpmeet.

But it is no wonder that the ox has not had his

life written. The three stages of society are more or less permanent, and he is used only at the beginning of one; his appearance is but momentary as he gives the new order of things its first shove.

This Bully owed his fine form, and his position among his fellows, to a piece of good fortune that befell him in infancy. When he was a calf he was missed in the spring round-up. Thus he was spared the branding, the weaning, and all that befalls a young bull who is not fine enough in breeding to become a sire of the herd. His mother was a black Spanish cow that had got up into that part of Texas from Mexico; and I think she must have been related to heroes of the bull-ring, for Bully looked the part exactly. His father was half Durham, and so he got his short, symmetrical horns. Having been missed in the spring round-up, he took all advantage of a most affectionate mother. She let him nuzzle at her far beyond the usual time; and so, on a mingled diet of milk and grass, he filled out with the full physique of a bull. When the riders found him out, in the fall, he was still following his mother about; and it was a fine sight to see a neat black cow with so

flourishing a child. He was almost as big as she, and just as strong; it was hard work to upset *him* by horn and jaw to brand him. He was evidently intended for a near wheeler. Jeff took hold of him as soon as he was used to the yoke.

Even in a story of civilization, it is necessary, I suppose, to tell what became of the hero. In the course of time he fell into the hands of a man who had no more work for him; and seeing that he was becoming older and tougher every day, he was hurried away to Chicago. There they put him through the system — hair for plaster, horn for the Japanese to carve, soles for shoes and the high heels of beauty, combs for ladies' hair, fertilizer, imitation butter, lily-of-the-valley soap, more gewgaws than Little Buttercup ever peddled. No doubt some of his tough hide became harness; and some of that worn-out harness is still hinges on corn-cribs, after so many years.

In Chicago there was an old Judas bull that was trained to lead the herds across the Bridge of Sighs. I have seen him, and I have thought how the near wheeler, in all the innocence and honesty of his heart, followed the crowd across that stilted runway. Inside there is a stall; and above the stall

is a board on which a man stands with a sledge — at just the right height for the sledge to come down plump on the star in the middle of each forehead. All day the man works, as if he were breaking stone or driving railroad spikes; and he fells herd after herd. I do not wish to be tragic; but standing before that stall I have felt like writing on it, "Here fell Bully, the father of his country." It must be remembered that I knew him well, Horatio. They made beef of him — and used the rest for the by-product. But I 'll wager "a dollar *and* a quarter" they never conquered that callous bull neck of his. They never made charity soup out of that.

III

ON A MORAINE

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UP on the shoulder of a terminal moraine was a barley-field whose fence was to furnish me with stone; and I prospected its beauties with a six-pound sledge. "Hardheads" many of them were called, and they let fly enough sparks that summer to light the fire for a thousand years. They were igneous rocks, and they responded in terms of fire.

Such rock! Rag-carpets woven in garnet and topaz; petrified Oriental rugs; granites in endless designs of Scotch mixture, as if each bowlder were wearing the plaid of its clan; big, uncouth, scabiose, ignorant-looking hardheads that opened with a heart of rose, — each one a separate album opening to a sample from a different quarry. I have seen cloven field-stone that deserved a hinge and a gold clasp; I have one in sight now which is such a delicate contrast of faintest rose and mere spiritual green that it is like the first blush

of dawn. Imagine smiting a rock until the fragments sting you in the face, and then seeing it calmly unfold the two wings of a moth! I have broken into a rock which pleased me so well that I held it in mind in order to match it; but though I had the pick of a hundred and sixty loads that summer, I never found another. There is "individuality" for you.

Some of them are "niggerheads." These are the hardest rock known to practical experience. There are those that have refused to succumb to the strongest hitters in the country. Some of them will break and others will not; the only way is to try. Fortunately I had had some early training as a blacksmith; but this was as if the smith were trying to break his anvil. I have seen the steel face of a hammer chip off without making a mark on one. And yet the glaciers wore them off to make soil and left them rounded like big pebbles! I never realized what ground is, till I became acquainted with the stones that did the grinding.

My fence was eight to ten feet in thickness, and shoulder high; and similar windrows of rock ran over the moraine in all directions, like a range upon a range. It is, of course, valuable land that

warrants a wall like that. The barley-field might easily have defied a siege-gun on all four sides, for it had had so many bowlders on it that they had been built up into more of a rampart than a windrow. On a nearby field from which the timber had been removed, but which, notwithstanding, was far from "cleared," it looked as if it had hailed bowlders. You could have forded your way across it without putting a foot to ground. I have seen places where the glaciers had deposited rocks in surprising uniformity of size, and as thick as the heads of an audience (a comparison that means no harm, I trust).

Because of my encounters with "niggerheads," and other layerless or massive rock, I had difficulty in getting a handle which would not give out. Not that I broke them with mislicks, but the sudden bounce of the steel jolts the grain of the wood apart, and then a split begins to work its way up the handle. After this happens a man will not try to crack many bowlders, for the split hickory vibrates in a way that hurts. That sudden sting and numbing of the arm is the only sensation I ever experienced that resembles the sting of a Texas scorpion; and that is an injection of

liquid lightning that suffuses the membranes from hand to shoulder, and dwells a while and fades away. I might say here that the sting of the dreaded scorpion is harmless, like that of the tarantula, as any one with a few experiences knows. A wrong-headed bowlder that has kept itself intact for ages, and spits fire at you, and then takes measures to protect itself, is far more dangerous. One of them shot off a piece with such force that it went through my leg-clothing, as the Germans say, and made a respectable wound. This, however, is just what is needed to rouse you up and make you hit back; and when you have had success with one you are sure to pass on to another.

There is an enticement in their secret, locked-up beauty that lures you on from rock to rock till nightfall. Thus you are kept at it, till some day you find you have become a slave of the exercise habit; you are addicted to sunshine and sweat and cool spring water; your nose, so long a disadvantage to you, comes to life and discovers so many varieties of fresh air that every breath has a different flavor to it. As for myself, I rather prefer to take wild plum or clover in my atmosphere — or a good whiff of must off the barley-field. Along

in July it is pleasant to work somewhere in the jurisdiction of a basswood tree. Compare this with the office building or the street-car, where the only breath obtainable is second-hand. Nobody could now coax you back to where people have eyes that see not, tongues that taste not, and noses that smell not unless they have to. I *have* experienced smells in a city that would make a baby cry.

In this leisurely bowlder-breaking you have become so strong that you need work to make you comfortable. When you wake up in the morning rested, your fingers have a feeling of the absent sledge-handle; there is a missing presence at the end of your arm which makes you understand easily enough how a person can have feeling in a limb that has long been cut off; and not till you have taken it up again does your body seem entire. When a man has become so strong that he needs work to make him comfortable, he would pound rock if it were only limestone in a quarry. What then is it to go bowlder-hunting in a barley-field? Rocks of all ages and varieties, sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous; and now and then a plutonic piece that was unthinkably old when the Atlantosaurus strolled about, stepping

thirty feet at a stride. Sixty millions of years, scientists agree, since life in its lowest forms made its appearance on the globe; four hundred millions since the molten earth began to cool and form plutonic rock! If a man has antiquarian tastes, let him browse in one of these stone-fence libraries with a sledge. It is like opening ancient volumes with beautiful pictures in them.

Bowlder-breaking exercises all the parts, intellectual, physical, and æsthetic, — it sounds as if it were Culture. If so, it is the only form of it I ever came across which did not spoil one's appetite. Your digestion attends to its own business, and you become a disciple of plain thinking and high living. If I could explain it in all its branches at once, I would no doubt succeed in starting up a cult of glacial stonesmith. A six-pound sledge is the true key to science and health.

It will probably be said that I am a fanatic. But wait. Please listen to what I have to reveal. I rolled off a rusty-black sort of a one. I worked it around into position for striking. The sledge simply rebounded. Nine, ten, eleven blows; and then it fell in two, disclosing a black interior of beautiful mat texture. Diagonally across the face of it

was a straight white stripe as wide as one's finger. And an inch and a half away was a contrasting stripe as straight and fine and parallel as if it had been made on a loom; it was like a bold design in French silk. With its slightly wedged shape, it looked for all the world like a dashing four-in-hand tie. It had broken in just the way to make a key for the arch of the fireplace. Here, then, was good luck indeed, — the very necktie of the house all done.

I next essayed a light-complexioned one; and it opened the first time I knocked. It was a light gray stone that glistered as with spangles of silver; it had shining scales like a herring, and each scale a little mica mirror that flashed cool metallic beams. Could anything be in better taste than light gray and silver? I picked it up tenderly and set it down right-side-up, next to the keystone. I passed on. The next was a moth — but I shattered one of the wings. It was some sort of infinitely fine greenish sand that had absorbed chocolate-colored matter, and become a pudding-stone with a big plum of the subdued purplish-chocolate in the proper place, and I had gone through it in a cross-section. It was really a chocolate-colored

bronze, powdered with that peculiar soft green that old statues take on; and the evanescent powdery effect was so convincing that I thought, at first, I could brush it off. This antique delicacy was solid and everlasting; I would not have taken a dollar for it then and there. I set it carefully alongside the knight of the silver scales.

But enough. If I fought it out on this line it would take all summer. I merely wish to indicate what I am talking about. If I am a fanatic, let it be so. If I were a crazy Cromwell, it is one of these same processions of roundheads that I would want to lead over the face of the country. If I could only march a mile of them through the cities, giving demonstrations and lectures! They are a rough-looking lot, but there is beauty in them. I once stood, hat off, in a little church in New York where they go to worship John La Farge; and if there is as much beauty and inspiration in one of those stained-glass windows as there is dispersed all over the face of this country, put me down for a plebeian. It is as a crazy-quilt beside a Persian rug.

Whenever I stopped for breath I had a bird's-eye view of agriculture, the fields all laid out in crops

of various colors so that the country was a map of itself. Nearer at hand it was a most statistical scene, the corn all adding itself up in rows, and the Holstein cattle set down in black and white — a pleasing prospect of diversified farming. The name of glacial soil is Diversity. So many elements have been ground up in the making that it will raise any sort of an honest crop; and if it is not tropically brilliant, it is steady-going and dependable. The drainage is just suited to the amount of rainfall; there is inexhaustible gravel to make roads; and every field has stone on it for an everlasting fence. As I patrolled my altitudinous ramparts, sledge in hand, I had a commanding view of southern Wisconsin — a diagram of prosperity. Here and there were patches of hardwood or tamarack; and a mile or so to my right, down at the side of the range, was Heart Lake showing its shape in silver. I think the peculiar charm of Wisconsin lies in the fact that it is a man's-size country, — lakes that you can row across, hills that you can climb. And so near together that there is always a new shining goal, a lake, to tempt you onward. I am almost tempted into the folly of trying to put it in words.

I had not swung my hammer many days before I realized that I was midway between two bells. Back on Miracle Hill, that lifts its church-crowned summit like a commander from out the procession, was the bell of the Carmelite monks — they whose order was expelled from France; its tones came sweet and plaintive over the heads of the hills, and spoke to all the country. An equal distance from me, in the opposite direction, was the town bell, that rings curfew as faithfully every evening as if it still had a Yankee at the rope.

Near by was a Norwegian settlement, originally composed of sixty families. Not a great distance away was a village where German is spoken more exclusively, it is said, than anywhere in the country. Back in the depths and heights of the moraine was Erin, still strongly Irish, with its log cabins and old charcoal-pits, attesting its respectable age. At every crossroads were the Swiss, making cheese. And in the distance I could see the newly-primed houses of the "hands" at the factory — still more nationalities. The solid foundation of it all is the German, a lover of the soil. Wisconsin is a favorite stamping-ground of the Sociologist; and it is

hardly to be wondered at that the State University excels in agriculture and the philosophy of government.

As my fence bordered a steep stretch of road along which the farmers passed with their loads of milk and hay and agricultural implements, I found myself in a position to become well introduced to my neighbors for miles around; and at times, when the sun was hot, I was quite willing to stop and explain my appreciation of the stone, or talk about the crops. By fall I had met so many solid, wholesome Americans, of all nationalities, and so democratic, that I was really glad they had all had so much practice in meeting foreigners. An immigrant from the city they took to quite as naturally. And at what great risk to themselves! Suppose I had been a lawless literary hunter hoping to bag some rare specimen of fellow man and take him back to my magazine all mangled in his feathers!

I discovered but one new dialect, and that would not be accepted by any editor in the country. Had I come here for that purpose, it would have been a sorry day for me, as witness the following conversation. It is two German

women who are speaking, in the presence of an Irish woman.

"Th' tap o' th' marnin' t' ye, Mis' Brettschneider. 'T is glad I am t' see th' likes av ye. Iss yer daughther Gretchen goin' to the Hill th' morrow?"

"Faith an' she is. Ven me bye Heinrich can get th' bay haarse away from th' plowin', I t'ink I 'll go mesilf, bedad."

This is not travesty; it is a report of German dialect. The manner of speech came about naturally enough. When the Germans arrived here in full force, the country was already settled, largely by Yankees and Irish; and the German had to buy his farm here or there. In this way a number of them found themselves located in the town of Erin, where, of course, they learned the language of their country. And I leave it to my fellow citizens in Wisconsin whether a German cannot speak as broad and rich a brogue as any son of Erin. This, although exceptional, is hardly an exaggeration of the cosmopolitan processes of democracy in Wisconsin. In other places you find the exact opposite. At many farmhouses, if you wish to be understood in English, it is necessary to address the father or mother, who were

immigrants, and not the members of the second generation. The mother speaks English well, and her son, who works the farm and was born here, does not understand it. The parents, starting as farm-laborers among Yankees and New Yorkers, had to learn English; but when they had saved money and bought out their employers,—a very usual process,—and had a household of their own, they naturally reverted to their native tongue.

One day I took a trip to Miracle Hill, whose steeple dominates the scene for miles around. It is not till one goes to the top of one of these dome-like wooded knolls, three or four hundred feet up, and all made of "drift," that one begins to realize what a stone-crusher and mound-builder a glacier was. And so recent it was! When a man considers with all his might the scientific rough estimate of four hundred million years as the time that has passed since the world began to harden and form plutonic rock, a glacier seems absolutely modern. If that Azoic, that no-animal time, is looked upon as being several thousand feet back, the glaciers will be but a few inches; thus one catches the spirit in which the scientist says, lightly, "In times so recent as the Glacial

Epoch." If a plutonic bowlder, a fragment of Azoic time, could really speak the language that Wordsworth claims stones can speak, it could tell the whole story of life from the first microbe to the megatherium — and then the decline and fall to the mere elephant and man. The mention of a glacial epoch seems almost "timely," and the other is so far back that it is no time at all.

From the time the first life-cell floated in the sea around continents but partly formed, life and land progressed until the cave-dweller and his contemporary animals lived on the completed world. Possibly "there were giants in those days"; but such of their stone implements as we have found would not indicate that they could handle a sledge any heavier than I swing myself. When this sort of man was fighting his fellow animals for their dens, the glaciers came down upon them. Through some great revolution in climate, the snow piled up season after season farther south, and moved along by expansion and contraction, helped somewhat by the downhill slope from the Laurentian range. It was as if the Arctic zone, with all its snowfields pressed into ice, had decided to migrate to a

warmer clime. Those weighty ice-fields, big stone-mills grinding the grist of gravel and rounding off huge fragments of rock which had been torn bodily from their bed, — rolling and wearing and sliding them along and making soil of them, — kept melting at the edges as they reached the warmer clime; and there, dropping the bowlders and piling up the débris in a long line of mounds, made a moraine. One of these hills was but a good wagon-load of gravel; and the whole shape of the scene was determined by the nature of the rounded rolling pebble. Where they did not make positive hills, and very steep, they dropped down a landscape of broad low knolls — rather like a hilly country melted and run together. Such is the Kettle Range of Wisconsin, so called because of the shape of the hills and valleys; such are all the small-lake regions. They are well named "glacial drift," for when the winter is white upon them, they look as if their whole substance were but the huge wind-work of the snow.

Between the hills are valleys without outlet — deep rounded kettles, indeed, that catch the water and hold it till it leaks out of the gravelly bottom. The whole country is rolling in the same

basin-like way, so that in the farmer's woods are little tarns that you could jump across, in the broad pasture-land are undrained bottoms where the tamarack finds a foothold, and in every day's journey are a number of the beautiful spring-fed lakes with which summer-resorters all over the United States are familiar. These lakes are but a larger manifestation of the blind valleys and the hollows in the pasture-land; it is because of this nature of the surface, due to the rounded pebble, that there are so many small, clean-filtered lakes in a glacier-built country.

The limits of glacial action in the United States are marked by the Ohio and Missouri rivers. If one conceives the Ohio extending onward to the Atlantic through northern Pennsylvania, and the Missouri reaching to the Pacific through northern Washington, he has almost the exact boundaries beyond which the ice-fields did not encroach southward. All over this territory are evidences of their work, to a greater or less extent, here and there. The effects of glacial action are most marked in the Appalachian region, in a sense; for there, on the granite structure of the country, they could scratch the history of their progress as

on tablets of stone. But in Wisconsin, a comparatively level country, they show themselves as complete country-makers, hill-builders, unhampered agents of their own sweet will. It was one of their favorite dumping-grounds. Thus Wisconsin has a furniture of hills which do not belong to it, a scenery which has rolled along and moved in; and all made up of pieces of the geological Everywhere. This state, the foundation of all these hills and knolls, might easily claim to be the oldest state in the Union, for it had its head out of water at a time when there was nothing else to be seen of the United States but the tops of the Appalachian Mountains. But the original state, as it were, has been quite covered with the recent addition of landscape. I had a well put down a hundred and thirty-two feet, and brought up glacial matter all the way; but somewhere down there, had I kept on, I should have struck Wisconsin.

Such hills, while they lack the accentuation, the scenic ruggedness, of rock, have yet an influence of their own; and this you feel especially when you get into the tumultuous heart of the range and look down into these bowl-like wooded

valleys without outlet. They are not valleys with the life of outgoing streams and an open door to the rest of the world; they are deep privacies in the heart of nature, not intended for thoroughfare or habitation. The dark little pond at the bottom, forever unruffled, invites you down for a spell of deep and moody contemplation. They are retreats, places to go down into with your secrets, and then to leave and go up into the world again; the public may not pass through; and they are so constructed as to forfend them from all other uses. I have no doubt that many a penitent, on his way to the church on the Hill, has felt their subtle invitation, their promise of secrecy; it must have been on account of them, quite as much as the wide outlook from above, that the mysterious praying Hermit pitched his habitation on the summit. It seems quite natural that a place of holy pilgrimage should have grown up and established its wayside shrines amid such surroundings. These places of refuge hold a breezeless silence while you pray or think; and the way up to the panoramic summit, past the stations of the Cross, is not a mere matter of three or four hundred feet: it is all the way from depression to

elevation. They seem to have been made for the very purposes of a monk.

The trees here grow branchless to twice their wonted height, in the struggle to get their heads up into the light and air. So tall and thin are they from this sort of competition, one with another, that they cannot stand steady for a moment; they swing slowly from side to side in long, deliberate movements that seem actually solemn. They do this when there is hardly a breeze to be felt, as if it were an act of their own. In some places they are so tall and branchless, so out of all stable tree-proportions, that they seem not to be standing up, but hanging down from the sky — like big ropes of a belfry on which you might expect to ring the clear chimes of heaven.

One cannot help but feel, as he gets into the spirit of the soil, that those westward-wandering Yankees who here stopped their prairie schooners and picked out the town-sites and put up the well-wrighted mills, — some of whose stones grind the feed to this day, — must have found a certain solemn welcome in the fieldstone scattered about. It was a new New England.

They did these things, and then, as usual, "went West." Many of them fought in the war for the Union, and many came back; but altogether they kept drifting westward — "Yankees" all of them, whether they came from Connecticut or Pennsylvania, or the belligerent regions of the Erie Canal. And now the "Yankee" is to be found in greatest force in the burying-ground at the edge of the town. In such a cosmopolitan community it is a strange experience to wander into this quiet place and find such old worthies as Comfort and Thankful addressing you from their headstones. Many of them date their birth back to the eighteenth century; and those who have 17— on their tombstones are known to the inhabitants, being local celebrities in death. I have had them all pointed out to me — and not by a Yankee — with a certain commendable pride; as if they gave a sort of historical ballast to the Ship of State.

In one of these villages, railroadless because it was founded before the railroad had found its way to these parts, and the one which is the most German of them all, there sat, until just recently, an aged and cultured gentleman — somewhat of

a "character" in a fine way — after whom the town was named. When he died, a little over a year ago, he was the oldest "living" alumnus of Yale. There he sat, surrounded by his ancient collection of books, and some dusty paintings which he prized and valued highly, amid a population where German could be used to better effect than English. It was quite a change he had seen in his day. By such little glimpses of the past, one gets sudden perspective of the growth of Wisconsin. Even curfew, although a European custom, harks back to the Yankee. When it rings at Hartford, at eight o'clock in winter and nine in summer, the children run home to their mothers as promptly as if they had seen the ghost of a Puritan. It is the Yankee's passing bell.

In certain connections you will not hear their absence regretted. They were not, to tell the truth, very good farmers. It was not they who piled hundreds and hundreds of loads of stone into a single fence. But now, when there is sore need of good natural mechanics, — masons, joiners, machinists, — you will occasionally hear them spoken of as ensamples. Their buildings were

well carpentered and joined; and in them are still preserved marvels of whittling in the way of canes and hat-racks. Some of the canes, as patiently elaborated as Japanese engraving, attracted attention at the Centennial Exposition. Even up on the cornice of the house now passed, may be seen a whittled frieze of acorn and oak-leaf. All of the "Yankee" did not leave, however; and what is left of him may not be studied in any one community, for he is pervasive and generally at home; he plays *skät* and *schafskopf* and drinks beer and speaks German; he is doctor, lawyer, and office-holder — in many ways a publican and sinner.

Small towns have a bad reputation; they are said to be given over to narrow views, backbiting, provinciality, and a general inbreeding of the species. For some reason, this is the exact opposite of the workings of village and country life in Wisconsin. And there is an absence of racial prejudice in communities, even among small farmers, which is surprising — there is a cosmopolitan spirit which one would expect only among the most traveled classes. I think it is due to this balanced heterogeneity of population, act-

ing under the particular conditions of the small town. In the small town a man is more of an individual; he is a larger fraction in the world; and so his importance to the community makes him more of a person than a member of a race. Even the little farming communities, racial colonies, cannot keep separate for long; they come together in working out road-taxes, in business and politics and farmers' institutes; and they are brought next door to each other by the farm telephone. And on the monthly Fair Day, the most home-keeping are brought into contact with the whole surrounding population. As an agent of true democracy, this is entirely different from the Afeurasian mix-up of the big city. There the Congress of Nations is forced together in a factory, from which the Nations go home to a community, or, what is worse, to a life that is essentially a hermitage in the crowd, a no-connection vagabondage of rented life. In the country the contact is of a basically different kind; it is a communion between homes. As a result, the marriage record will show an appalling forgetfulness of the past history of kings. What is more desirable, however, is that cosmopolitan spirit on

which democracy has got to be founded — the essential Americanism of the man who was born in Germany or Norway or a British island. By all sorts of influences the people are cohering. And if not in marriage, then in the saloon. In this country the German saloon, a solid institution, must be taken into account. Whatever its faults, it must be said that it is here a very crucible of democracy. This is a country of immigrants — seeing there is no other word for it. But here the word is ridiculous. The hills, then, are immigrants; the soil is a foreigner. The scenery itself is situated on land which might as easily rise up and claim to be the native country. And the immigrants are all being Americanized, not by any "ism," but by the good old glacial process of mixing them up and stirring them together.

From the artist's standpoint, a moraine, seen from a distance, lacks accentuation; the hills all wear the same contour; they march in uniform and none asserts itself over the others except by being bigger. But is not their rounded, flowing, broad-based expression of peace and solid satisfaction just as good — or even better? There is something German about a moraine, whether you

view it from inside or out. It is a well-known fact that the dwellers in the most ancient ranges, such as the Jura in Switzerland, which Time has worn down to mere nubs of mountains, find that the hills make a place for themselves in the heart which grand peaks of the Alps cannot fill. Big, self-assertive young mountains — and the tallest are always the most recent in the world's history —can be overbearing in their beauty; and after a while you want to go home. I can imagine an inhabitant of the Appalachians, whose asperities the ages have worn off until they are almost domesticated, being glad enough to get back from the company of the high-spirited and riotous Rockies.

However this may be, the contour of these glacial hills tells the truth about the country, for Wisconsin is the quiet, philosophic home of the cow. When the Japanese want the best Holsteins to help raise the war debt, they do not confine themselves to Holland, where the breed originated, but come here to Wisconsin. Japan has come and been satisfied and returned for more; and only recently the cow ambassador was back again negotiating with the farmers for cows with which to beat the world. While the average dairy herds

throughout the state are not yet up to the standard that is hoped for, it is no small point of distinction to the government itself that it has developed a world's champion cow. In the report published a year ago it was announced that Colantha 4th's Johanna had produced in twelve months 27,432 pounds of milk, which made "3-15 pounds of butter per day for each day in the year." By doing this for her master, the State, she conquered the best cow in Switzerland. While other cows, and indeed herself, have gone beyond this in individual yields of butter, it was the best yearly performance: she won the long-distance championship, as it were. And this is what counts in practical dairying.

By such examples the state specialists raise the breed, and awaken among the farmers a spirit of emulation. While much fault is continually found with the average herd, there are plain farmers in Dodge County and otherwhere who have broken records of one kind or another, — short or long ones with regard to milk or butter-fat, with this particular breed or that. When a farmer is working a cow to break a record, he feeds her as industriously and scientifically as a locomotive fire-

man would stoke his engine on a trial run for a mail contract. This is kept up day after day or week after week, and a record kept of every ounce of milk, together with its daily test for richness. A long run like this is, as a farmer will tell you solemnly, "hard on her constitution"; but she must do it if she would be a famous cow. It requires much stamina and digestive ability on her part, and much science on the part of the farmer; and while it might not seem very exciting sport to the city man, it is a matter of great importance to those who know what is going on. It is not so easy to be a cow as it looks.

The State University has always on its farm herds of cows and hogs that are being educated,—drawn out to see what they will make. When last I heard, there were some promising hogs at Madison; and recent triumph in this line was the great Berkshire, Star Masterpiece II. When Star Masterpiece went to Madison, he was a little pig that cost seventy-five dollars, a descendant of many famous animals. He was fed on the best and kept in a "blue-grass paddock"; and when he had gone through Wisconsin University he was bought back by the man who had sold him, for one thou-

sand dollars. "From the day he came to the University farm as a small pig, until he left it, he never missed a meal and always consumed his allowance with a relish that caused many visitors to marvel at his great feeding quality." He left behind him at the University forty little pigs, who will try to outdo him. He is now a famous sire whose name stands high in hog literature; and his public is of a size that might give many a poet a pang of envy. In Wisconsin it is considered more of a triumph to do something like this than to have a victorious University eleven.

The milk goes to the cheese-factory at the crossroads, or to the creamery which is to be seen near the railway station — a "milk-depot" indeed. The disposal of the milk at the creamery is a most systematic operation. The farmer drives up to the side of the building, and his cans are hoisted to a loft, where the milk is weighed and tested with a sort of hydrometer which tells exactly the proportion of butter-fat in the product. Along with his empty cans he receives a brass check. Then he drives around to the other side of the little building, where there is a hose about the size used in metropolitan fire departments. He inserts the

check in a slot in the side of the building, whereupon the hose squirts out his due amount of skim-milk. Then he drives home with a wagon-load of milk and feeds it to the hogs. This is the universal practice; it is a land that flows with milk, if not with honey.

Near the depot will be seen also the brewery which supplies the little town with beer, and probably a big malt-house which receives the barley of the region, and sprouts and dries it. Wisconsin malt is of a superior quality known all over the United States. The proprietors of the many malt-houses go all the way to New York and Pennsylvania to sell the malt that was made from the grain that grew in the country that Jack Frost built.

From this preëminence in milk and beer it might seem that Wisconsin produces nothing but drink; but this is not true. It is also a great tobacco country; and, as might be expected of a region with some of the features of New England, we raise a quantity of Connecticut broad-leaf. While the state does not lead Kentucky in this respect, a little town here claims to be the biggest tobacco market in the world. It is hardly likely

that the Prohibition wave will make inroads in Wisconsin. Since the success of the movement throughout the United States, there has sprung up in Wisconsin an organization, with influential members in every village, which is busily fighting the battle of Beer for the whole nation. It is doubtful if any state in the Union, when put to it, could raise such an influential and able army of volunteers in the cause of "Personal Liberty," as the opposition to Prohibition is called. And yet it is not a country of drunkards; it is the very opposite. As compared with other parts of the country, even Milwaukee is notably temperate and steady-going.

But this is not continuing with matters on the moraine, unless, to see things from that standpoint, we are all of us Hardheads — as might be implied in certain obdurate and durable qualities. And a man who works a summer — two summers — on stone fence, appreciates thoroughly the nomenclature which conceives these stubborn bowlders in terms of "heads." To trim them into shape you have to know how to take them, according to their shape and character, their stratification and lines of cleavage. In working plutonic or

"massive" rock, especially, you must become a phrenologist of hardheads; you must study their bumps and general mass. It is so with human individuals. More than one Hardhead of my acquaintance, plain practical men, have more in them than a finished quarry-stone might ever suspect. Uncouth, unpromising characters they may seem, so that you would hardly look for anything inside of them. But form their acquaintance, knock a few chips off them in social contact, and they will strike fire and open with a heart of rose. They are likely to surprise you.

What sort of average citizen will result from this mingling and rubbing together of diverse material? What sort of foundation for democracy will it make? Will strong racial idiosyncrasies disappear into one colorless, mediocre mass of men? It is a question which all guess at, to no definite purpose. Will not a glacial population be about the same as a glacial soil? That is strong, steady-going, reliable, suited to any sort of crop. The United States is a large experiment in man-breeding. Horse-breeders have long given up the fallacy that like produces like, so far as the individual is concerned; it is the strain which counts.

And the greatest triumphs in breeding have resulted from this sort of mixture. Among us animals without pedigree, who can tell what surprising atavism lurks in the blood of some human "scrub"! Or what will be the result of this grafting of nation upon nation! It will certainly have some surprises in it, at least; and it is not this, but "inbreeding," that really weakens.

And this reminds me to conclude — where possibly I should have begun — with the remarkable pedigree of the state itself. Stretching across Canada, north of the St. Lawrence, and ending in the regions about the source of the Mississippi, is a range of low granite hills called the Laurentian Highlands. These hills are really mountains that are almost worn out, for they are the oldest land in America, and, according to Agassiz, the oldest in the world. In the days when there was nothing but water on the face of the globe, these mountains came up — a long island of primitive rock with universal Ocean chafing against its shores. None of the other continents had put in their appearance at the time America was thus looking up. The United States began to come to light by the gradual uplifting of this land to the north and

the appearance of the tops of the Appalachians, which were the next in order. Later, the Rockies started up. The United States grew southward from Wisconsin and westward from the Blue Ridge. An early view of the country would have shown a large island which is now northern Wisconsin, and a long, thin tongue of this primitive rock sticking down from Canada into Minnesota, and these two growing states looking out over the waters at the mere beginnings of mountain-ranges east and west. They were waiting for the rest of the United States to appear.

As the heated interior of the earth continued to cool and contract, and the water-covered crust sank in some places, and kept bulging up higher in others, the island of northern Wisconsin continued to grow; and the Alleghanies came up with quite a strip of territory at their base. The western mountains made no progress whatever; it was as if they had some doubt about the matter. A view at another stage of progress would have shown Wisconsin and Minnesota entirely out, and pulling up with them the edges of adjoining states, and a strip along the Atlantic about half as wide as New York or Pennsylvania. Still

no United States. There was water between these two sections, and some islands scattered about in the south. The western mountains had not been progressing at all; they lagged behind for æons. These two sections, beginning with Wisconsin and Minnesota in the west and the Appalachians in the east, kept reaching out till they made continuous land; and thus Ohio and all those states between are some ages younger. But they are much older than the West; for at a time when the whole eastern half of the continent had long appeared, the Gulf Stream was flowing across the West, and the waters were depositing the small seashells which make the calcareous matter under Kansas loam. All that country is much younger, and the western mountains are as big as they are simply because they have not had time to become worn down. As to Florida, it was a mere afterthought, an addition built on by coral insects.

The whole story of those east-central and southern states — how Pennsylvania and Ohio and Illinois got their coal, and Michigan her salt — would make a lengthy narrative; I have mentioned just enough to show the age of Wisconsin and the still greater age of some of that glacial

matter that came down from the direction of the Laurentian Highlands. It is the oldest land in the world; and the other states, I am sure, will not resent my taking out the state's pedigree and showing it. Wisconsin took part with the East in what geologists call the Appalachian Revolution, — is a veritable Daughter of the Revolution. I mention it merely because I think it greatly to the credit of a dairy state that, at a time so early in the world's morning, she was up and doing.

IV

KUBLA KHAN

KUBLA KHAN

THE following is an exposition of the meaning of "Kubla Khan" as Coleridge intended it. I am quite willing to let my part in the matter pass down to posterity without any comment; but I will say, as I should, that it is not put forth tentatively. It is not broached experimentally upon the critics, to find out who I may be—like those ancient ones who discovered their Prophethood in the general acclamation. Coleridge looked forward strongly, not only to posterity, but to a "congenial spirit." It is now a hundred and thirteen years, and upon this fact volumes might be written.

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure dome decree:
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea.

Here do we see the great Power making the universe. And more especially the blue dome

that is over all — the sky and its contents. A dome it is, because it is so lofty at the zenith and seems to come down to the horizon all around. This appearance is very striking on a clear and cloudless moonlit night. At such a time it is as domelike as the roof of an astronomical observatory, which is, indeed, exactly built to fit it. Blue depths of time it is, in a way; and yet mere space. It has this encircling and arching appearance because of *ourselves* — the centrality of our finite nature. And so He made this realm where Time runs down to the dark and shoreless sea of Eternity. The river is simply our every-day "river of time." The Germans call it "flowing time" (*fliessende Zeit*). The concept is so universal that it is the common speech of mankind.

Note the name which the poet gives the river — Alph. The river of time is named after its source, meaning the beginning. "Alph — the first letter of the Greek alphabet, answering to A, and hence used to denote first or beginning." So the dictionary tells us. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord." Thus the Bible uses it. It has been so used time out of mind.

The poet uses it to express not merely an historical or imagined, but an *ever-present* truth. He says that not only creation but time had a beginning. Let us examine this closely. Time is as far back as we can conceive: it is then Eternity. It is as far forward as we can conceive: and thence onward it is Eternity again. And so this flowing time of the Now has its source in what we must call the beginning. And as we think onward, and help our imagination by looking forward through space, — through "caverns measureless to man," — it comes to an end, and empties, as it were, into that vast, inconceivable sea of eternity. Man is always at the exact middle of time: he can conceive it as far backward as forward, precisely. Let us add this to our former observation as to his centrality. Note also that it was all made by a "decree." The word is carefully used to show us that this is a picture of the act of creation. The creator said the word and it *was*.

> So twice five miles of fertile ground
> With walls and towers were girdled round.

What, let us ask, would anybody mean by ten miles of ground?

Coleridge got his immediate inspiration for this

poem from a paragraph in Purchas's "Pilgrimage," which says: "In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteene miles of plaine ground with a wall." And so he could have written: —

> So sixteen miles of fertile ground
> With walls and towers were girdled round.

That would have served as well; it fits the metre. Or he could have made it fourteen or thirteen or eighteen, seeing that it was not of particular importance to him. But he made it "twice five."

This "twice five" miles represents, approximately, the distance from man to the horizon, first on one side of him and then on the other. It pictures him as he stands there and turns and looks about, to his left hand and to his right, at that circle of set bounds from whose centre he is never to escape. It forces upon us again, what has been twice noted already, the centrality of man's position in the universe.

The reader has discovered that this poem is a sort of allegory expressive of the deep and fundamental truths; it has two sides. One side is a material picture, and the other side is the idea

which this picture vividly and unmistakably expresses. So let us consider the idea, the truth.

We say things are good or bad; big or little; beautiful or ugly. An elephant is big, an ant little. Ourselves we consider neither big nor little; we are Man. But to an individual of the Protozoan variety, one nine-thousandth of an inch long, an ant would be a mammoth, a mountain. In such cases we measure things by our own five or six feet of height: a thing is good or bad which is beneficial or injurious to us, as the case may be. And we do not even hesitate to say that the world was made for us. We are the centre, the focal point, of all plans and purposes. A man stands at his everlasting centre of the horizon, the very cynosure of space and time; and he sees in the scene around him a vivid presentiment of his own inward nature. It is a sort of picture of the centrality of his viewpoint, — his necessary egoism. And these hills and trees at the edge of his round domain are the "walls and towers" that shut in his finite nature. The poet says the place was "girdled round"; and a girdle is circular; it is the horizon. In each word is a careful regard for the idea.

> And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
> Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
> And here were forests ancient as the hills,
> Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

The point to be explained here occurs in the third line — the "forests ancient as the hills." This sentence, one of the effects of Coleridge's "opium," must have been somewhat of a puzzle to readers of the past century. The present reader will hardly need me to tell him that this is exactly the state of affairs in a world that has been all created at once by a decree.

As we have observed, the pictures in this poem have ideas behind them. We shall consider the meaning here. Let the reader look back sixty millions of years and halt at that point. We occasionally have to do this. Do not geologists tell us that it was about that date that primary rock was formed? Having done so, let the reader ask himself what the interval between then and now consists of — in his mind. Is it time? Hardly. It is arithmetic. It is hardly that in truth: it is a sort of logical assent to the belief that figures do not lie.

Let him think, then, of an event in his own

life — something ten or twenty years ago. Did the mind have to travel through the intervening weeks and months and years to arrive at the point? Did the reader see the swift seconds fly past on the route? The point I am making is that we do not remember time: we remember events.

Again, let the reader place himself out in the woods for a moment. The stones and soil underfoot may have been in their present form during inconceivable ages. The oak is but three hundred years away from its acorn. If this fact were called to his attention, — his imagination, rather, — he would ponder it a while, possibly a minute. Then the mind would revert to things as they are: and again the spring-clad trees and green-vestured earth would exist in coeval beauty. Life is a point of view; and we were not made equal to Space and Time. What we look upon is simply Now; for that is the stuff life is made of. The world knows it and is always young. It is born again with each generation; it is created anew by each little child. And so the forests *are* as ancient as the hills. We shall see this more deeply as we proceed.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast quick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced,
Amid whose swift, half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.

Here we shall begin to realize the wonderful organism of this poem. I think I had better give the reader a glimpse of it as a whole before we proceed to consider it word by word — thus we shall know whither we are drifting.

We have said that the river in this poem is Time — our old familiar "river of time." Now this fountain is an old friend of ours in life and literature: it is our "fountain of life" — simply a mode of speech that has been adopted and sanctioned by the race. And this Chasm, in which we find the fountain, is equally familiar to us; it is that strangely vacant, more than empty, yearning, rumorous place which we often speak of as

the "empty breast." Its every word makes a living picture of the state of affairs we refer to when we say "my soul is a void." This fountain is described in words which subtly, accurately, intimate that it is nothing else than the beating heart. From out the chasm the fountain "momently" was forced; and its burst was "half-intermitted." What a pointed description of the systole and diastole of the heart! Coleridge started to be a physician in his younger days.

"And do you actually mean to say," exclaims the horrified reader, "that a sort of fountain which is the heart, gushing up in a chasm, and flinging up fragments, flows away in a river which is Time? And that this is *sense?*"

Most assuredly. This is more than sense: it is Truth. But here let me reply with a question. Do we not generally accept and admire a famous poem in which occurs the line: —

Moments in thee rise and flow.

Rise and *flow* in you, mind you. Did any one ever question that, or consider it nonsense? And yet it says the same thing. Why is that? To make this matter more pointed, let me revert for

a moment to the forests ancient as the hills. Emerson, in his poem, "The Problem," makes a statement regarding the Pyramids, the Parthenon, and ancient temples in general. He says: —

> And nature gladly gave them place
> Adopted them into her race,
> And granted them an *equal date*
> With *Andes* and with *Ararat*.

Did any one ever question that, or say it was "meaningless," or nonsensical? Why? Why, then, is "Kubla Khan" considered meaningless? Is this not the same sort of statement that Coleridge made regarding forests?

"But," says my reader, who no doubt has a mind of his own, "do you really mean to say that there is any necessity in all this? What a strange thing, to imagine a man at the middle of this horizon and then proceed to express him in terms of the landscape — to make him up in that foolish way: chasm — fountain — river!"

Permit me to answer with a question again. Does not all the poetry which we accept so easily, and does not a great deal of our own conversation consist in personifying nature? Personification is one of the stock methods of poetry, of rhetoric,

and even of a sailor's talk. If you can personify nature to any effect, why not nature-fy a person? Think this over.

"Nevertheless," insists my obstreperous opponent, "nevertheless, this is a strange sort of proceeding. What profit is there in these mere symbols, these queer comparisons?"

Here we come to the point. These symbols, allegorical pictures, are not the object of the poem at all. They are the least of it. As we shall presently see, it is only a necessary method of saying something. When we have read the poem, as an allegory, we shall discover that it has organism — a whole. We shall perceive a set of *relations* between the ideas: and here will be Truth itself. For truth is not mere facts: it is the relation between facts. This poem is not an allegory at all, in the final outcome.

Consider, also, that these comparisons of the poet are not of *his* invention but of ours. They are the long-used property of the race. When we represent or express time by a river, that is symbolism, or what you may wish to call it. But the thing the poet is doing as a whole, is to present us with an organism, an *interrelated* picture.

Those interrelations are the organism of Truth itself. It is not symbolical of Truth: it *is* truth. And this is its peculiar distinction among poems. And it tells the truth about that which we think least about — namely ourselves.

It will pay us to take up this part of the poem more in detail, a few lines at a time.

> But oh ! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
> Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !
> A savage place ! as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon-lover !

Let us ask ourselves, in the spirit of strictest truth, how we conceive the soul; how we represent it to ourselves. It is unnecessary for me to say that we cannot get it before the mind's eye at all. The best we can do, in case of necessity, is to depict it by means of a heart, — as on a valentine, for instance. "Two souls with but a single thought." And we do not offer that organ literally, of course. We mean something else. It is but a butcher-work of expression. Not to deal, then, with such mere poetry as *we* use, — such loose symbolism, — let us ask in all truth what we *do* mean by the soul. What we can assert positively about it. Is it not the truth to say that we

mean our longings, our ability to hope, our thirst for knowledge infinitely greater than we have — for life infinitely longer than we know — for happiness infinitely greater than we experience? Is it not the ability to feel that lack, that *emptiness?* And the instinct that we were created for things greater than things on earth? Is it not the inward tragedy of unfulfilled desire? This sounds like the truth.

Well, then, a poet who is expressing the truth must express it in that peculiar teeming emptiness, that too-pressing nothingness within the breast. He must show it as it were a chasm in our nature. To paint it for us, he must have material: he cannot present it as nothing, for that would not be anything. And just as a vacant house can be emptier than outer space, he depicts the void within a chasm — to give it place. And also because this fits in with all the other things he is going to show us in the completed picture.

A savage place! A romantic place! A place of love and longing, a place capable of self-sacrifice and suffering; a goodness that is the "eternal feminine" within us. Now this view of personal love which we see every day, is strangely contradictory, when you think about it, to the hard

merciless rules under which humanity works in the whole. The "survival of the fittest" is, in truth, the survival of the strongest, the rule of the brute! Or think of government and its Department of Butchery! We see a deep truth in the larger phases. And this capability of goodness in the individual, of tenderness and generosity, seems very incompatible with that, does it not?

The reader must be warned against the impression that the poet has actually placed a woman in this chasm. It is a place as holy and enchanted "*as e'er*" such a woman came to in such a plight. It is merely his means of conveying its atmosphere — the "eternal feminine." And what a description of the soul in a few short lines! Romantic — savage — holy and enchanted — a place of passion and grief and hope and faith and longing and disappointment. That is what the soul is. He depicts the human breast.

But to proceed: —

> And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
> As if this earth in fast quick pants were breathing,
> A mighty fountain momently was forced,
> Amid whose swift, half-intermitted burst —

Here we have a further view of what is in the

human breast — the heart. I have called attention to the fact that this fountain is not a steady flow, but that it surges upward at regular intervals.

These words "momently," "half-intermitted": what a careful description of the systole and diastole of the heart! Here then is the heart beating. And the fountain is that stream which it sends upward to the head, and which breaks and falls, in a very spray of veins, to its source again.

If one were to speak of the heart as a fountain, the comparison would hardly excite the least comment. It would be hardly a figure of speech, for the heart in truth *is* a fountain. If we were to say the heart is *like* a fountain, and then go on to describe it in terms of a fountain such as we see in outer nature, it would be nothing unusual at all. Neither is it here. For what is the difference between comparing the heart to a fountain and comparing a fountain to the heart? He is doing the former after the method of the latter.

Let us break away from our conventional tether long enough to read this poem.

And by what a subtle submonition is the whole life-sustaining organism depicted in that phrase, "As if this earth in fast quick pants were breath-

ing"! He does not make formal comparison at every point, in the way we are used to, for the reason that the whole poem is but one figure of speech. It is to be one extended comparison, with a marvelous wholeness and unity. He does this in order to get scope for those intricate interrelations which Truth consists of. The reader must grasp it as a whole or not at all. Naturally we cannot grasp it until we have examined it. And so we must look at the parts.

> A mighty fountain momently was forced,
> Amid whose swift, half-intermitted burst
> Huge fragments mounted like rebounding hail,
> Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail.

Here we enter upon a consideration of Thought — of life in its mental manifestation. Let us ask ourselves what we know about it. — What is thought? What is its source? We do not know. We can only say it is a manifestation of the life within us. We can only trace it to its origin in a mechanical sort of way, — which is to say, by an examination of our physical organism. Let us, then, be thus matter-of-fact. Let us find out by what power all these reasonings and fancies of ours are produced.

Shut off the supply of blood from the head, and Nature very quickly gives the answer: it comes up to the brain in this fountain, it would seem; and the fountain has its source somewhere in the invisible life-principle.

And what is thought itself? what its nature? Shut your eyes, and you can still see things in a fashion. Or you can, with open eyes, reproduce in the mind things that are far away, or that have long passed. You can ply these things upon one another in imagination, and make up your mind what the results will be — reason. Thought, then, is a sort of inner world, a place of mental *things*. What are these things? They are, in truth, things that we get out of the world, for we can think of nothing that is not in some way a reproduction of what the world contains. And those happy thoughts — business ideas, inspirations, poems — are somehow the product of this physical organization; they come when the brain is working well and making use of a full supply of replenished blood. All we know is that these ideas, whether they pop into the brain or come as the result of deep reason, are thrown up within us as from the fountain of life. Why does the poet call them

fragments? For two reasons, — because they are pieces of something else, the world without; and because ideas are *only* pieces of truth! No man knows it as a whole; at least not the average man. And why does he particularly speak of some as being large and others small? Because it is simply true. The organism of a Shakespeare, for instance, throws up "huge fragments," mighty thoughts; and some people respond in mental activity only to the knocks and blows of the world; they think only to the extent that is necessary to get along in life. They are not spontaneous thinkers; they think only when they have to, and only to a certain extent; they are indeed like "chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail." That is well expressed. They have a little thought pounded out of them. But in a great thinker, huge fragments "vault"; he thinks and has ideas out of a pure necessity of mental action; it is a live spontaneous activity. The diction of this poem seems to be very carefully attended to.

> And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
> It flung up momently the sacred river.

We observe something peculiar in these two lines. Amid these dancing rocks, the sacred river

was thrown up "at once and ever." How could it be at once and *ever?* How could a thing be ever, or always, — past and future — in a moment? And it was thrown up "momently."

It is very simple. Let us consider, in all simplicity and candor, just what Time is. In this life of ours we find ourselves speaking of time and eternity. There is a difference between them: time is one word and eternity is another; and we do not make a distinction without a difference. There is an eternity behind us. Duration in that direction is endless. And there is an eternity before; it is endless in that direction too. And in between is a length that we call time — an exceptional piece of duration which is somehow different. Is it not plain that, but for our interference, it is all *one* eternity, including our "time"? It is we who make the distinction; and we do it for our own purposes. The discrimination has only to do with ourselves. God does not need it; the animals do not need it; it belongs to us who have clocks and calendars and consciences. It has only to do with us who have fond memories of life, hopes and plans, and keen foresights of death. Where does time begin? We do not know where

our idea begins or leaves off. If we were all to die to-morrow, making the distinction useless, I doubt if God himself would know where to rub out the mark. God's forever is a whole; and *we* have made this division, vague and indefinite. God's eternity is all of one piece. The fact of the matter is that time — past, present, and future — is an idea of man, the thinker: it is a thing, therefore, of our own creation. And this is true in the sense, of course, that to us only is the *record* of duration of importance — the computing beforehand, and afterwards, of When.

To get down then, most strictly, to the question what time is, we must consider the flowing time of the Now. The past is a memory, and only a few events left entire. As I have observed, things that happened ten years ago may be more clearly seen, nearer to the consciousness, than many happenings of last month. All time was a Now in its day; and so, if we wish to think what it essentially *is*, we must consider Now. Look at it truly, in this way, and it is plain to be seen that time is — Life. That is where it originated; that is what it is composed of. This is a deep human and philosophical truth — the identity of life and

time. It originates in man; and once we look the fact squarely in the face, we see the whole meaning of the poem.

If any man does not realize it fully, let him go and stand before the clock. There let him stand and feel his heart beat. A man is a machine set for a certain time — running down. That is why he is so vitally interested in the measurement of it. If it were not for this, there would be no time: it would be eternity right along. The clock is counting it for you; it is the arithmetic of your heartbeats, the rapid adding-up. Time is certainly human life; nothing else. And life is what? It is consciousness; it is ideas, thoughts. It is our comings and goings that the clock has to do with — our plans; which is to say, our conscious acts and ideas. It is they, these thoughts and sensations, that punctuate time and make it. Think of Rip Van Winkle when he slept twenty years! He was very much surprised when he came and found a new George and a United States! He was no doubt dumbfounded to see that the stock of his gun had rotted away in the few hours he had been sleeping — just over night as it were. The clock takes care of those things for us till we shall *awake.*

There is such a thing as time when we are asleep then? — when these thoughts and sensations are suspended — dead? Oh, yes! And if the whole human race were to sleep and never wake up, would not time still go on? My dear reader, I do not think you think it would be worth while to call that time, do you? And so we do not. We call it eternity. That is the distinction.

We have probably considered this with enough thorough simplicity to go ahead without mistake, to another point. The past and future are only the present. If a man does not believe this, let him pause and consider past time. He will see immediately that it is present time. It is the time he is taking to think about it. Past and present are ideas; they are the product of this present moment; they are carried about in the Now of life. They have reference, these ideas, to ourselves only, here and now. We are the producers of past and present, at any moment when we wish to operate the mind in that way.

Now let us look at the poem. The fountain is life, or the life principle. "And mid these dancing rocks [or ideas] at once and ever, it flung up momently the sacred river." Which is to say, it

is life that originates time and all other ideas: time and life are identical. That is how this fountain of life, which is described in terms of the heart, physically, can produce a flowing river which is Time. As I have said, if the reader does not realize this, let him stand before the clock.

"And mid these dancing rocks at *once* and *ever*." These words "at once and ever" simply mean, then, that life produces all time, past and future, in the present moment. Life is Now. That is exactly what we have been considering; it is true. It produces past and future in the same time that it produces ideas; and that means that the present is real, and that past and future are not real time, but imagined. All of which is plain enough; and might easily have a profitable moral attached to it.

> Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
> Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
> Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
> And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean;
> And mid the tumult Kubla heard from far
> Ancestral voices prophesying war.

Here we shall be able to show, by arithmetic itself, that our understanding of "Kubla Khan" has been correct. We shall lisp in numbers for a

while. In the beginning I pointed out that "twice five miles" is insufficient as land-measurement. A single linear measurement will not suffice to describe expanse unless it is indicated as applying to some particular geometrical figure, as a square, a particular triangle, a circle. I said also that this twice five miles represented the diameter of that circle which we call the horizon: and that it was expressed in this peculiar manner in order to depict a man standing at the centre and looking about him in opposite directions. And now, in these later lines, we find Coleridge describing the stream as being five miles long. It is only necessary for us to consider, then, that we have been correct; for a stream rising in the middle of a circle which is twice five miles across, would flow just five miles before it emptied over the edge into space — infinity, eternity! We see that the poet has given us every part of the scene conscientiously. The whole of "Kubla Khan" is an unmistakable picture of truth: it is consistent and accurate in every way.

To proceed. This horizon represents the whole of life; by which I mean the whole of any one's lifetime. And this river emptying over the edge,

or disappearing, that is, into space, represents the whole of time. How, the reader may inquire, can this stationary circle stand for the whole of one's lifetime, and this five miles of river represent the whole of time? We have but to consider. All of a man's life is truly represented by a circle of which he is the centre. Travel about all you will; there you are still at the centre of that circle. If you change your horizon (and here is the point), the other has ceased to exist except as you remember it. Into your own everlasting circle you have to *import* all other horizons by memory. At that centre of the Here and Now you have to create past and future time by a mental process. Only the present time and the present living is real, actual; all else is imaginary, for memory itself is a sort of imagination. Thus we see how the whole of life and all of time may be depicted by one horizon. We are beginning to understand that this horizon in the poem is not the boundary of any particular part of the earth's surface, but is that everlasting, restricted circle which a man wears as if it were a part of him, and from the centre of which he may never escape! And it is all meant to enforce upon our imagination the funda-

mental truths of human existence — our finite nature, our centrality or necessary egotism of outlook.

The progress of human life the poet describes as being "mazy." By this he means the unreality of time past and future — our limited information, our necessary mistakes in foresight, our changed plans and growing uncertainty as to what the future will bring forth! All this makes its progress rather mazy, does it not?

In only one way may you escape from that horizon, and then you go over the edge. Time certainly falls with a tumult; we can hear it all around us and within. The ancestral voices prophesied War. By this Coleridge means that life is a war between the soul, with its infinite instincts, and this finite, hampering world of material limitations. It is the struggle of the soul. In order to prove this meaning, I would have to interpret another of his poems which has never been understood; but I shall not do that in this place.

Here we have arrived at the end of the first and longest division of the poem. "Kubla Khan" is written in three divisions. We usually consider ourselves as being made up in a triple unity, —

animal, mental, and spiritual. The poem, in recognition of this fact, has three parts which are indicated by a change of metre. I shall go into this matter later, at a point where it will clarify the reader's conception of the whole, and not here, where it would be an interruption. But there are certain remarks which belong here as showing how carefully everything has been attended to in this fountain picture.

Of all the questions before the world of science to-day, there is none in which it is so absorbed as that same question which Coleridge asked in one of his shorter poems — What is Life? The scientist, the biologist, is especially engaged in trying to find out what is physical life. Certain biologists, evolutionists, having traced the physical pedigree of man down to the "simplest" forms of life, point to that mere microbe in the slime, and say that life was merely the getting-together of matter. They say that life is but matter itself, acting upon itself in a chemico-physical way. It made itself! These are the "spontaneous generationists." They say that what we call life is but the action of matter upon itself, and that is all — life is purely the result of this physical organism

which got itself together and grew up; we come from the "simplest" beginnings, which were, themselves, spontaneous.

Other scientists and thinkers — and I think the deeper ones — consider this theory folly. They point out that life could not be the mere result of an organism, — this machine of heart and lungs and muscles and brain, — for it was the life principle which got this organism together and which now operates it. The organism is the result of a power called life, and not life the result of the organism. Now this is a live question to-day; and we frequently hear of some scientist, some "Professor," having created a low form of life by chemical process. But it always turns out to be an exaggerated report.

Let us suppose that certain scientists were to prove to-morrow that "physical life" (by which they mean the power to move about and to grow by inward processes) is only a phenomenon of matter — purely material. The whole human race would then ask another vital question. "That may be true of physical life," we would all say, "but how about that other life — how about thought, intellect? Is that only a manifestation

of the bodily organism, a product of the machine?" And if some further scientist found himself able to prove that it was, we would all be up with another question. "Oh, yes; that may be true of certain brain-processes — somewhat like the more intelligent animals. But how about the Soul? How about *that?*" And there would be another question to answer. You see, this idea that we are separate from all other things in creation in the matter of having a Soul is natural — it is like an instinct of our own. And so we have the word "body," which separates us from mere dead matter: the word "intellect," which separates us from the brutes; and the word "soul," which separates us from this material world altogether. It is our nature.

When we try to answer ourselves by considering body, mind and soul separately we find ourselves confused by what we see every day. For instance: are life and activity only matter? is thought only a manifestation of life? is the soul only consciousness or thought? When we try to answer this, we find ourselves so much of a unit that we are confused. Confronting us is the phenomenon of sleep! When the brain takes a recess, when it

becomes physically inactive, we are unconscious beings — There is no thought! How, then, about the eternal sleep? I may say here that the simple phenomenon of sleep is a scientific puzzle.

And then — if the soul is not consciousness, the ability to know and to feel, what is it? What else do we desire a soul for? Are we but animated clods — "physico-chemical" manifestations? You see, the whole question gets back to that problem — what is physical life? Is it mere matter, or is it matter working under a previous divine principle? And so we see that the scientists, the biologists, however purely "scientific" and materialistic they may think themselves, are working away on that question of a divine principle. It is there that they disagree in their scientific opinions.

Now Coleridge answers this question in this first division of the poem; and he is careful not to violate, in his picture, any phase of the truth as he considered it. Thus we see in it that thought in a certain sense (the fragments thrown up) is a manifestation of the organism or machine — the fountain. But it will be noted that he has depicted the soul *apart!* He has not made *that* a

product of the mere action of the fountain. The soul is a mysterious pervading influence of this chasm in which the fountain, or life, finds its source. In short, he has shown mental activity as a result of this physical activity; but the physical activity has *its* origin in this "holy and enchanted" region of unseen, hidden power. This region of mystery I have called the soul; but it is in fact the divine principle in every sense — the source of the life-principle physical and spiritual. It will thus be seen that Coleridge was no "spontaneous generationist." His views were opposed to that, and they are in accord with the deepest thinking science to-day. However biologists pry into the sources of life (and they have made wonderful progress in recent years with the microscope), they are confronted only with activity and not with life itself; they can see life acting, — nothing more. Neither can they prove that life and matter are identical.

This brings us to another detail of the poem. In "Paradise Lost" Milton draws a distinction as best he can between two kinds of mental activity; he introduces it by showing life consuming matter, which thus sustains it and be-

comes vital matter, animal matter, and then intellectual. Here is the passage: —

> . . . flowers and their fruit,
> Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
> To vital spirits aspire; to animal;
> To intellectual! — give both life and sense,
> Fancy and understanding; whence the soul
> Reason receives, and reason is her being,
> Discursive or intuitive.

Which is to say, mere matter in a flower becomes *vital;* when eaten by a brute, it becomes *animal;* when partaken of by a man, it becomes intellect; and thus the soul *receives* reason. Milton regarded all creation as different degrees of Spirit; for he says, in speaking of the ascending scale of life, "Till body up to spirit work, in bounds proportioned to each kind." Now the point is that in the last line he speaks of two kinds of reason — intuitive and discursive.

This may not be very clear; it may not seem to arrive clearly at a point, a satisfactory conclusion, completely expressed. And so I will show Coleridge's way of saying it. At the same time we shall see why he wrote this "Kubla Khan" in three divisions as he did.

In this first division he showed us thought in

a certain sense; and I do not know how to describe it more clearly than by the following: Let us consider ourselves; let us ask what we mean by Reason. We see animals about us; they have a certain mental activity which rises in some cases to our own understanding in a way that can only be called Intelligence. They seem to have passions too; they have affections, manifest grief and mental suffering. And yet we make a sharp division between themselves and ourselves. We allow them Instinct. And, we do not, I believe, consider them immortal. Ourselves we separate from them by a higher form of brain activity called Reason.

Now Coleridge, in this first division of the poem, is showing us thought — activity in the sense that it is merely spontaneous thought — the sort of mental activity that comes to *all* men at *all* times in the operations of life. It is what I might call human instinct. In the second division, to which we are coming, he shows a higher form of intellect — contemplation, or thought for thought's sake. This is the philosophic faculty, or the ability simply to contemplate the divine beauty and mystery.

"Kubla Khan" is written in three divisions — animal, intellectual, spiritual. In the first division he considers physical manifestations as exclusively as possible — the organism of life. But he could not, and did not try to keep out of it all reference to thought, to passion, for the simple reason that body, thought, soul are inseparable scientifically. And so he showed us particularly the *relations* between the body and the spirit; between the physical organism, and life and thought and the infinities. Thought, in that first part, is touched upon only to that extent, — thought and passion in the lowest *human* sense. But in the second division he takes up contemplation, the essentially human, the higher-human, mental activity. And the third division (to which we shall come) goes on to sing of the aspiring spiritual nature purely — the song of the soul.

So it will be seen in what sense he makes thought a product of the organism. But it must be remembered that he makes the very organism itself, as typified by the fountain, originate in this "holy and enchanted" source of things. Thus all life is divine; Nature herself is divine; and man its highest manifestation, including in himself the

animal and a certain sort of intuition or instinct, and mounting higher in intellect in a way that is entirely separate from all lower life. He does not step into the folly of those scientists who are examining things to determine whether things are just "natural" or whether they are the work of God! Think of it! To thinkers like Milton and Coleridge, all nature is supernatural. Which it is. Physical life — the vital spark — has its source in the divine essence, just as the soul itself has. And he was careful not to show the soul as a mere product of this fountain: he kept it separate; he was careful that we should not conceive the soul as a mere product of matter. It *all* has its origin in this realm of mystery, and that realm, nevertheless, evident to the inner nature.

Here I might proceed with the second division of the work; but a few words just at this point will enable us to take another step in our understanding of why he wrote it in this way *at all* — a way that seems strange and unfamiliar at first view.

Let us see how far we can go in searching out the nature of life and thought. Consider sleep. We are unconscious; we have no power in the

operations of our muscles. What gives the heart this self-operating nature as if it possessed an intelligence of its own — a separate being and industry while we sleep? It keeps on with its own business as if it were quite a separate animal! Here we see the physical life-principle as vividly and as separately as possible. What can we say? All we can say is that nature does it. That fountain, the heart, is being forced up out of the very nature of things. We are like the crop that grows; we are as truly a part of nature as the tree that is rooted in it. This is what the poet is enforcing upon our minds. We are a manifestation of the mystery of life, of divine power which is itself nature. We are a part of nature, but the higher part. That is why he depicts man as a *part of nature.* He conveys it so that, if understood, it will be clear, unmistakable, tacit in its explanation. The fountain is ourselves — and that is why he says, "as if this earth in fast quick pants were breathing": it connotes our very vital organism. Think, then, of the accurate, careful, conscientious truth-telling of this poem.

He does not try to teach us that which he does not know — that which we do not know.

He keeps within the scientific facts. He teaches only in this sense; he straightens out and clarifies our conceptions. He furnishes a picture, an organism, which will bring us to the point and keep us there. He does not teach; he shows us how to arrive at that which we *already* know. And we know it as soon as we cease to deal with mere confusing words and abstractions. He teaches us in things—the concrete, the unmistakable. And there is no higher form of teaching than that of clarifying the mind in its confusion of learned terms. With all our boasted "science" the world never needed clarifying by a straight thinker so much as it does to-day. We forget that scientists can be fools as well as other people; a man may speak folly in any language.

> The shadow of the dome of pleasure
> Floated midway on the waves;
> Where was heard the mingled measure
> From the fountain and the caves.
> It was a miracle of rare device,
> A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!

Once again we come across a way of speech that is very familiar to us. We are all of us poets at bottom; and this particular poet, dealing so strictly with nature *and* with human na-

ture, which is truth, is quite a person to take us at our own word. He is dealing with a certain mental activity. And what do we call thought? We call it reflection. Reflection! Why, that is the word we use to express what we mean by an object being held up before a mirror! You see we are all poets, figure-of-speechists, symbolists, in nearly all we say. Our very language is of that origin: it *has* to be. So let us not flout poets, symbolists, else we shall be making fun of ourselves and betraying our profound ignorance.

This so-called shadow of the dome of pleasure is particularly presented as being "midway" of the stream, in order to convey that the object of it was directly overhead—that is, the sky. We call contemplative thought reflection. When he represents it as being a mirroring of the universe on the bosom of the river of life, he is saying the same thing in a fuller, more potent way.

> Where was heard the mingled measure
> From the fountain and the caves.

This is merely a statement that the profoundest and noblest manifestation of mind is the ability to contemplate the mystery of life and infinity—to overhear them in their mutual relations. The

reader remembers, of course, that the fountain has its origin in Life as a principle. The words "chasm," "cavern," "cave," he has used to represent three things or ideas — the soul, time, and space. Why does he speak of them in that way? Because we really cannot conceive space as a whole. It is "endless," we say, and we merely use the word for what we can conceive of it. But while we speak of it as endless, we cannot really imagine anything infinite; we simply imagine it as big as possible; but there is a bound to our ability. And so he has represented them as bounded, or finite, to correspond with the fact of our minds. And while time was shown by caverns "measureless," or beyond our physical ability to reach out, they were thus bounded or limited, for the very fact that time itself is a limited idea. For me to go into this any further would probably be supererogation with the thoughtful reader. The "mingled measure from the fountain and the caves" means life and infinity, the subject of philosophic contemplation.

This "mingled measure" is a fine intimation of the unity of all things — that unity which the philosopher strives to represent in the regularity

of law. And there is a hint of the poet in it. The whole substance of this is, then, that the noblest employment of the faculties is this contemplation of infinity and the mysterious origin of life; for that is a communion with the works of the divine principle. And this part ends:—

> It was a miracle of rare device,
> A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice.

This "caves of ice" refers to the coldness of interstellar space. Science tells us that it is seven hundred degrees below zero out there!

And now to explain its meaning. The reason it is cold in outer space is that there is nothing out there to reflect the rays of the sun. The lack of surrounding objects to reflect, and thus translate the rays into a general warmth, is the reason of the cold upon the tops of mountains. This, at least, was the theory of science in Coleridge's day as it is in our own. We must judge such figures of speech by the information and understanding of the time.

Now he is simply depicting the fact that when the mind gets out into absolute infinity it cannot think at all — *reflect*. It can just wonder. (And this ability to wonder, I might add, is the greatest

of gifts: it is the faculty which the ordinary mind soon loses. The common it mistakes for the mere commonplace, and as the deepest truth is there, such a mind cannot think deeply.) And think what a wonderful place this "pleasure dome" is. The sun's warmth comes down through inconceivable space, inconceivably cold. It is not warmth at all until it strikes our world; and there an action is set up which translates its peculiar power into heat for us. Really it is only the inside of our pleasure dome that is heated! And thus we career through frigid reaches of space on our specially heated earth! And with our space colored blue (limited in look) to suit our finite minds. I wrote a poem to this effect when I was younger than I am now; and so this appeals to me strongly. It is certainly "a miracle of rare device — a sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!" A miracle! All nature is a miracle.

The reason that we cannot reflect when the mind gets out there is that there are no objects to reflect upon; for we get our mental pictures out of the world of substantial things. The reason that the mind cannot act out there is the same reason that prevents the sun's power from acting.

That is why he speaks of it in terms of cold. And think of that coldness in the other sense of being unhospitable to the inquiring mind! When we try to conceive the Infinite, we look out into endless space; and lo! that fluid nothing is impenetrable; it walls in our finite minds as in a cave — a half-transparent, enticing cave that scintillates deluding colors. Baffling promise, and that is all. It is certainly cold to the warm aspiring imagination. A mere philosopher can never be satisfied; he needs a further sight. To him it is "cold." Now is not ice like space in that regard, — transparent, and yet impenetrable, and cold? And caves of ice!

If the reader finds himself confused by this double meaning of "reflection," he has but to remember that the word thus doubly used is his own poetry — the poetry of the race. There is truth there. Coleridge speaks truth in all its phases, physical, metaphysical, and psychological; he speaks of nature and of human nature. That is where he transcends a mere specialist in "science." By "shadow" on the water he means the blue sky imprinted upon it — reflection.

I have said that it is a great disability of the

ordinary mind not to be able to wonder at the customary. Things become worn to the mind; the intellect is calloused. He is here, by this strange means, giving us the ability to see it anew. That is the highest function of a poet. In case the reader is skeptical as to my interpretation, I must remark that this will be proven absolutely. But here it would interrupt the argument too long.

Let us here observe, however, the way in which the poet has been dealing with us. He has been speaking our own familiar language; he has met us on our own grounds of the river of time, and the fountain of life, and that exact description of what we call the empty breast; and he presents us with that same poetry which we have in our word reflection — all of them figures of speech that *we* got up; poetry of our own composing.

Consider for a moment that other poem of ours — the symbolism of the red heart which we put in the valentine. As a depiction of the soul, the deeper life, this did not suit the present poet; it was too loose and inaccurate. He expressed the soul more accurately. And he *did* describe the heart as it *is;* a physical machine. He is literally truthful. Who, then, is the loose-minded symbol-

ist, the vague and dreamy, unscientific and inaccurate poet? Is it Coleridge or the average man?

What has he been teaching us that is of value? Go out for a moment into that realm of the infinite which is before you; pierce the blue with your strongest mind's eye and feel the frigidity of the reception. It turns a man back upon himself; it reflects him back into himself as the only true source of information. Back in the core of his being, God is, too; there only is the court where he will consent to deal with man. There is where absolute truth is to be found — Inquire Within.

This is a plain fact which this confused "scientific" and soulless century has yet to learn. Consider the perfectly nondescript and shrewdly shifty plight of Religion to-day. It has lost the North Star and does not know how to box the compass. What confused it? Was it thinking? I think not.

And now we come to that division of the poem which is the spiritual nature. It does not talk or preach about this: it simply shows it in action. Spirituality is that inward knowledge of truth,

that vivid and absolute vision of the inexpressible. It is not a thing which is handed to a man and then carried about by him in a package of words. Its knowledge is absolute. Now, poetry and religion are very nearly allied. As Robert Burns wrote, when he heard that somebody regarded him as a heretic: "Did any one ever hear of a poet without a religion?" They never did. Shelley was an avowed atheist, Byron anything but orthodox, Keats simply a pagan, George Eliot (who wrote poetry too) was an "infidel" and translated Strauss — in fact, one might gather that no person of brains ever belonged to a church. It must be remembered that they only revolted against the shallow orthodoxy of their day. That was not necessarily Religion. Scientists it is unnecessary to speak of.

Coleridge was essentially religious; he might almost seem orthodox. But it must be remembered that he was always trying to translate theology into natural and acceptable truth — absolute knowledge. In his effort to do good, he tried to meet humanity on its own terms in that day. Poets have been most basically different in the matter of depth of thought — brains. For it is

thinking that makes a poet sing: not singing that makes him a poet.

Coleridge, in the third division of this poem, expresses that passion toward the absolute, that vision of the inwardly true, in terms that fit his own case — a poet. It was all one to him; he even pointed out that metaphysics itself was poetry. Truth is truth, regardless of terms. In this part he uses the familiar stock-in-trade of the poetic craft: the same figures of speech. But as he is dealing with spirituality in its wider sense, we find that Mount Parnassus has become Mount Abora, the poet's lyre has become a dulcimer, and the Muse herself is spoken of as an Abyssinian Maid. And we shall hear him saying that our passion is expression — this is what makes poets and poetic preachers. Once, it seemed to him, he had almost caught the words that would say it all. It is this that lures the poet onward in his task.

A damsel with a dulcimer,
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abyssinian Maid
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,

To such deep delight 't would win me
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome ! those caves of ice !
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware, beware,
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

The "milk of Paradise," of course, is Truth; and with this idea in mind, there is nothing about the passage that calls for further explanation. This ends the poem.

It is the most comprehensive panorama of truth ever set forth in any poem of whatever length. Coleridge has here written poetry in its truest sense; he has taken for his theme the basic everlasting truths of human life; he has submitted to people the simplest and profoundest facts about themselves; and he has done it according to a philosophy of expression which constitutes their very language. And the statement with which he ends has proven itself true. It has been taken for a "meaningless" poem, an "opium dream," for over a century. If any one is amazed at me

for venturing to contradict the verdict of four generations I can only say that I am equally amazed. The surprise is mutual.

> "Weave a circle round him thrice
> And close your eyes with holy dread,"

— if a certain kind of blindness may be so called.

This poem is essentially tautegorical — the opposite of allegory. It is allegorical in its means of expression, its separate terms, even as our common language is allegorical. But that is not the substance of the poem: that is merely the means of showing a set of relations. This set of relations is the organism of truth itself; and when a man has learned to read it familiarly, as if its figures of speech were but a part of language, he will perceive that this organism is the true poem. And the relations shown forth are not symbolical or imaginary; they are the thing itself. This poem is not dealing with fancies or points of view; it is dealing with *facts*. It is not allegory for the *sake* of allegory, *as such works generally are.*

No man of any poetical import will write an "obscure" poem. To all men of sincerity and sense this is about as cheap a trick as literature affords — a playing upon mere curiosity and in-

tellectual vanity. However, it must not be supposed, because a poem is at first hard to read, that it is "obscure." That may be only because it is deep, which is quite another thing. Now a deep poem is simply truth condensed, shown in small comprehensible space in its wholeness and essence. After it is explained at great length, the poem, upon being read, is very simple. It is like truth, which is profoundly hidden in simplicity. And the value of such a poem is that it brings to the mind, quickly, vividly, unmistakably, at any time, a whole, live philosophy. Truth only becomes *alive* when put in this form. Let us imagine all the mere facts of life set down at random in volume after volume. They would be of philosophic import only when the facts were thought over until sets of relations showed themselves in the form of law. To write these laws the philosopher has to use abstract terms — words broad enough, and therefore vague enough, to cover whole sets of facts. Such terms are only half understood by the lay mind, if indeed they do not merely serve to conceal the writer's own ignorance from himself. Many people imagine themselves thinking deeply when they are not thinking

at all; and for this pleasant diversion, abstract terms have been very accommodating in the world's history. A poet must also arrive at a philosophy. But instead of expressing it in abstract terms, of doubtful and unreliable content, he makes the truth over into a material picture of Things. If I may so express it, he makes the abstract into the concrete. Instead of speaking in terms, which are so easily misunderstood, so difficult to get satisfaction out of, he comes as near as possible to speaking in Things. He points out laws, by means of these devised relations, as if he were giving an object lesson. He cannot be misunderstood. This is the very nature of poetry, and in "Kubla Khan" Coleridge has achieved it ultimately. It is the most complete poem, the least fragmentary, imaginable. It is fragmentary only in the sense that any man who is enamored of Truth must feel that any effort at expression on his part is but a fragment of the wonderful whole.

It is well worth a little pains to learn to read it. It is as if the whole sublimity of "Paradise Lost" were run through the brain, by some kinetoscopic miracle, in the space of three or four minutes, and the whole of it thus brought at one

time with instant fresh delight upon the mind. The poem has lived over a century by its mere word beauty alone; and it has taken rank among the few great lyrics of the language despite its entire lack of "meaning." It is one of the few poems in any language that have been able to fly by song-power alone. But it is more than that. It is as if the whole bulk of speculative thought had been pressed down to the density of a diamond, and then cut into a gem that flashes truth from every facet.

I have considered "Kubla Khan," so far, purely with regard to its philosophy or meaning; and I have regarded it as poetry only to the extent that language is poetry. The unity I have brought out is the unity of truth. But there is another side to poetry — its music. And here we find a new beauty, another organism and unity.

Music itself has many depths of beauty. There is the mere assonance of sound; and there is the musical *work* in which sound becomes a mode of expression and conveys a succession of ideas. It is the same in poetry.

With regard to the word-music of "Kubla Khan" it is not necessary for me to speak in per-

son. Swinburne pronounced "Kubla Khan" "for absolute splendor and melody, the first poem in the language." William Rossetti said it was "an ecstasy of sound." Stopford Brooke wrote of it: "For exquisite metrical movement and for imaginative fantasy, there is nothing in our language to be compared with 'Christabel' and 'Kubla Khan' and 'The Ancient Mariner.'" Professor Henry Beers (to quote one of our own authorities) says of Coleridge that "no English poet has sung so 'wildly well.'" So I might keep on quoting from literary critics till I had filled many pages of this book.

Such verdicts have only to do with its sensuous beauty and pictorial sublimity as we catch it in the word or line. Critics could not examine its music as an organism, with regard to the meaning, for the reason that the poem was never supposed to have any organism or meaning. In view of my claim that it is an organism, it devolves upon me to show this in the music also, and I shall confine myself to my proper task. Coleridge was such a consummate artist that if he put poetry and philosophy together it would be that each should lend its virtue to the other. The music would

follow the theme; it would be a unit, a poem in every regard.

We find that it is. "Kubla Khan," an epic of Man in fifty-four lines, deals with him in his triple nature, physical, mental, and spiritual. Therefore it is written in three divisions. These divisions are not made by the mere separation into stanzas; they are observed in a deeper and more truly poetic way — by changes in the metre. And each change of metre sets the appropriate and informing music to each of these separate themes.

The first part consists of all that which is iambic; the second part consists of that which is trochaic; the third part consists of that mixed method which I shall not go into technically; it is simply Coleridgian. With regard to subject matter, "Kubla Khan," as we have seen, begins with an account of the material creation; it passes on to a consideration of man physically, and in connection therewith it treats of thought on the intuitive or common plane and with the soul as mere passion; it then takes up the higher intellectual faculty — the contemplative or philosophic mind; it then celebrates the spiritual nature — the passion of the soul in a higher sense than before.

There is a gradual rise in the subject matter. The poetic forms, in setting the music to the theme, begin on the humblest poetic plane and rise with it, as follows: —

The first division is at first four-accent iambic and then shifts to five-accent iambic. That is to say, it begins in mere ballad metre — the sober and simple narrative form which Scott found suitable to his rhymed tales, for instance. After seven lines of this, when the matter becomes more profusely descriptive, it takes on the five-accent iambic — the measure of Shakespeare. This is quite a rise, but it is far from ecstatic; it is still settled and steady iambic. The second part, the stanza which deals with the delights of reflection, starts over again with four accents to the line, but now it is the trochaic: and this is the four-accent verse of Elizabethan times. It is the movement which Milton used mostly in "L' Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." It is the rhyme form in that golden age of joyous depth of contemplative song. This is very suitable to the contemplative part, so nearly allied to the spirit of Milton's two poems. This, then, is a distinct rise, in enthusiasm, over the sort of four-accent verse with which the first

part began; the trochaic gives it more uplift. There is, too, a lapse and lave that is the music of the waves themselves.

The third division, consisting of the last various stanza, is in a rhapsodic and breathless spirit; it changes accent and syllabification in a way that seems almost erratic; the first line is four-accent iambic; the second line is four-accent trochaic; and after two more changes in three lines it shifts to three-accent iambic — and so it goes with delicate response to the mood, touching the meaning at every point. The "Weave a circle round him thrice" sounds like the measure of an incantation. This division is the part of pure inspirational song, soul ecstasy. I have not tried to analyze it except to convey the necessary idea: it is Coleridge, himself.

To this general statement of mine there are just two lines that prove exceptional. The second part ends, —

> It was a miracle of rare device,
> A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!

The contemplative division, set off by itself as a short stanza, is at first trochaic; but these final lines suddenly turn back to the iambic in five

accents of the first part. This is because the subject matter itself is reverting back to that "dome" which was spoken of in the first part: and this sudden change to iambic in two lines gives them an exceptional effect, as if the attention should be particularly drawn to them. And indeed it should. When the poet spoke of the pleasure dome in the first part he described it visually, as it would appear to the mere physical eye — the blue sky. But here he refers to it as it may only be seen with the eye of the *mind* — the caves of ice! It is no more the mere blue dome; the mind has pierced beyond that appearance, for this is the part that deals with the contemplative nature. The poet has accentuated this second reference to it in every way possible; the two lines are set off to the left in printing; they are followed by an exclamation mark, and the sudden change or relapse of the metre makes them stand out separately.

The music seems, to me, to fit the theme very well. There is not only a sensuous beauty of sound, but there is organism, a musical scheme in the whole. This might be taken as a sort of proof that the interpretation is correct, but I do not sub-

mit it with that intent. In the matter of proof, to which I shall soon come, I must be more positive.

In the prefatory note which is usually printed with "Kubla Khan," Coleridge informs us how the poem was written. "In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in 'Purchas's Pilgrimage': 'Here the Kubla Khan commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were enclosed with a wall.' The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines: if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking, he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper,

instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved."

This is the poet's own account: he speaks of himself, the Author, in the third person. And he goes on to relate that "at this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock," and that, on returning, he could not recollect the rest of the poem except a few scattered lines. From this account we have had, for over a century, the "opium dream" theory of the utter meaninglessness of "Kubla Khan."

In view of this statement by the poet himself, it has probably appeared to the reader that my complete analysis of deliberate intent and purpose in every word of the poem, and especially my showing of an organism which might seem the very opposite of inspiration, is preposterous — ridiculous. Of course, in order to make my interpretation stand, I shall have to explain this. And it might seem that in order to get over the discrepancy I would have to consider Coleridge a prevaricator. But this is not the case. I shall show that Coleridge was telling the truth, and that I have been telling it too. If the reader follows me I shall make it perfectly plain and simple.

Let us first consider something about dreams. Coleridge wrote a poem entitled "Phantom or Fact"; it is an account of a dream. It ends with the following stanzas, referring to this dream poem: —

FRIEND

This riddling tale, to what does it belong?
Is 't history? vision? or an idle song?
Or rather say at once, within what space
Of time this wild disastrous change took place?

AUTHOR

Call it a *moment's* work (and such it seems)
This tale's a fragment from the life of dreams:
But say that years matured the silent strife,
And 't is a record from the dream of life.

Which is to say, a dream may be the vivid conceiving of that which has been the subject of years of thought and experience. Now whether this is your definition of a dream or not, it is Coleridge's statement regarding *his* dreams. And so, if he wrote a poem like "Kubla Khan" and called it a dream, we have got to take his explanation of what he means by a dream. He must be allowed to define his word; and this looks very reasonable.

With this view, let us get down to facts still

closer to the matter in hand. James Dykes Campbell, who is now considered the most painstaking and sympathetic biographer of Coleridge, says, "A great poem on Man and Nature and Society, to be symbolized by a brook in its course from upland source to sea, was planned in conversation with Wordsworth, and a translation of Wieland's 'Oberon' seems actually to have been undertaken." We find this brook poem referred to in the "Biographia Literaria," but with rather prosaic detail. "Kubla Khan" was written in 1798 — according to Campbell's recent discoveries. It becomes interesting to know, then, at what time that brook poem was occupying his thoughts. We find that this was in 1797. It falls in the same period. Opinion, among critics, seems to be that he never wrote the poem. But here in "Kubla Khan" is a poem "on Man and Nature and Society, to be symbolized by a brook in its course from upland source to sea." Is it not a sufficient performance?

But the circumstances under which it was conceived seem to stand in the way of considering it so meaningful a work, so ingeniously contrived. In the first edition of "Kubla Khan"

the prefatory note began with the statement that the poem was published "rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits." This first paragraph, for some reason, was left out of subsequent editions. If it was published as a psychological curiosity, let us then apply a little psychology to it, a little knowledge of poetic composition and human nature in general.

Coleridge was a student of truth in whatever guise — physics, metaphysics, religion, government, or art. But he was a poet, and that means that he conceived his ideas vividly, pictorially. Such a man, pondering upon man's position, as shown in any line of study whatever, and seeing his necessary egotism, his centrality, would conceive the truth visually, as in a picture. He would see the typical man at the very centre of the universal scheme of things. The "river of life" would not be a dull, worn figure of speech that merely stood for its meaning as a current phrase; he would see it, and mayhap ponder upon it as a study in the psychology of expression. And so with all expression; a poet is a man of that nature. Finally he got the idea of writing a

symbolical poem; a condensed expression of universal truth. But how to do it? A poem must have unity, a master idea: it is a thing conscientiously striven after but suddenly conceived.

One day, he sat down with "Purchas's Pilgrimage" in his hand and fell asleep with a certain passage in mind. This was the magic flux; here was the picture into which all his symbols, his figures of truth, fell at once and took their places. This is the instant of cataclysm with a writer — a poet especially. He has been conscientiously gathering pieces of truth; he has selected them not because they seemed to fit a whole, but because he knew they were the truth; he has conscientiously cherished them and had faith in them, rejecting all else. But they do not make anything; they are not a whole. Suddenly, by some turn of the kaleidoscope they all fall together; they prove themselves and vindicate him and reward him for his fealty; and there is nothing more beautiful than to see truth getting itself into bodily shape for you. This is the moment of enthusiasm; and right there things begin to *whirl.* Your whole nature is enlisted and warmed for the attack: it is a moment of triumph.

Right there you will begin to march to the music if you have got it in you — poetry. Poetry is the ecstasy of finding truth in its own native expression. The rhyme often comes easy if you have got hold of truth and the inspiration that it brings. In this passage in Purchas's work was a delightful vision of Coleridge's cherished brook. "In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteene miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meadowes, pleasant Springs, delightful Streames and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the middest thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure." Into that ready realm his own long-thought philosophic images hastened and found place. Music and meaning fell together,

In Xamdu did Cublai Can —

The first line of his poem starts out with the *very* words that begin the passage in the book. Moreover, it is the alliteration of *d*'s and the two hard *c*'s which make essential poetry of it. It was all ready; it started itself up. In my opinion, the alliteration and simple measure of this prose passage had more to do with Coleridge's inspiration than the scene described; it was this that drew

his fancy to it and made the poetic discovery *of* the scene. Such a miracle happening to a poet like Coleridge no doubt put him into an ecstasy.

He woke up. He went to pen, ink, and paper and started right out with the passage in the book, as it stood. It was a time of inspiration with him. He dreamed he had written two or three hundred lines; but he had no definite idea of them, else he, being a poet, could have recalled their purport and song a little while later (after he had been interrupted). It was a vague impression.

Now anybody must be able to see that when he sat down to save the poem, he was engaged deeply in the act of *remembering*. He was engaged in searching his mind, in feeling for fugitive echoes of that poem. He no doubt tried to retain the mood, to keep in the imaginative realm of the dream; he solicited from his whole imagination the sense and sound of each succeeding line. In trying to remember, he would do the best he could. If baffled he would reason a little and think about what should come next.

Between remembering a dream poem in that way, and writing a poem, there is not the least difference. If Coleridge bent his whole mind and

imagination into thinking what would come next, it is safe to say that a poet of his ability would have it occur to him. Nor could any man writing in that mood — that continuation of a dream — be able to say afterwards whether an idea came out of his mind as the result of his thought at the moment, or as the result of its having been there before — especially as the ideas of the poem *had* been there for years. He did not dream a poem; he dreamed he wrote a poem. It was quite as real no doubt as the average man's dream that he fell off a house. But it was more real, in a way; for he had caught the opening song of it; he had conceived it pictorially; and no doubt he had heard the lilt of that poem over and over in his dream for three or four or five hundred lines. With a poet, music and meaning go together. Taking it all in all he did not dream the poem; he dreamed the inspiration. He does not aver, as a fact, that he dreamed all the words. He says that "on awaking, he *appeared* to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole." If he had had a distinct recollection, he probably would have retained it. When he came back to his work after the business interruption he had not *forgot-*

ten. The business interruption had spoiled the mood. And did he write that perfect lyric, in all its organism and accuracy of diction, its ingenious submonition of the parallel idea, in that short heat at the writing table? It is not likely.

"Kubla Khan" was written in 1798, but it was not published till 1816. During the interval he preserved it, carried it about with him, read and recited it to friends, and changed it. We know that he changed it to the following slight extent, at least. Mrs. Robinson, to whom he had read or recited it, just as he had to Lamb and others, wrote some lines addressed to S. T. Coleridge:—

> I'll mark thy "sunny dome" and view
> Thy "caves of ice," thy "fields of dew."

As there are no 'fields of dew in the poem as finally published, it is evident he had been improving it. He changed it more or less. And how much? Coleridge improved his poems continually; they grew in that way until they were perfect. It is impossible to think that an incessant thinker like himself carried a poem about for eighteen years without giving it a touch here and a touch there: without making now a slight subtraction, now a little addition and then a well-

pondered transposition. He probably did just a trifle to it now and then for eighteen years; and those trifles are the very thing that make a work of art.

In saying, then, that he wrote the poem suddenly as the result of a dream, was he consciously misrepresenting? Not at all. If Shakespeare had been asked when, and under what conditions, he wrote any one of his plays, he probably would have had no difficulty in naming the date. But, in view of the fact that he was in the habit of improving his plays through periods of years, it would have been difficult for him to say when he put all the *art* into a play. These changes were the making of them. Now, with a work like "Kubla Khan," the day when it was conceived and put into acceptable form and thus came into being as a poem, would always be regarded by the author as the day he wrote it. The conception of it was essentially the inspired part of the performance: a trifling change now and then would be a sort of proofreading—literary work. It is doubtful if he would realize how much he had changed it in so long a time; and anyway, not being able to give a long, detailed account of

it, he would regard *that* day as the day it was born.

And besides Coleridge could have conceived more of an organism, of a seemingly *ingenious* nature, in that half-conscious state of mind, than the world might be aware of. Let us consider this matter. Poets are peculiarly susceptible to suggestion. They are exceptionally sensitive to the allusiveness of words. And so we find that Coleridge and Lamb and others have given serious consideration to the nature of puns and spoken of them quite respectfully. Not in and of themselves, of course, but as illustrative of the power of words to strike out true veins of thought by double meanings in the most unexpected way. There are good puns and bad ones: and this suggestive power over the mind is interesting as being a psychological matter. And so, writers, being thus susceptible to words, have left on record their opinions of, not puns exactly, but the suggestiveness of words and the delight of the mind in finding a similarity, however vicarious.

Coleridge, then, was reading this passage from Purchas, and fell into a contemplative doze. As he was drifting along into the regions of Sleep,

that opening sentence kept repeating itself in his head. He had in mind that beautiful Palace undescribed: it was not very clear to him. And he had simultaneously in mind the "fertile Meadowes, pleasant Springs, delightful Streames" — an overpowering picture of outdoors. He saw it all, very vividly, and of course the sky — that place to which the contemplative mind so naturally turns. With the indefinite Palace in his mind, that blue dome erected itself; it spanned the scene in terms of architecture. And he thought of Him who had made it all. Coleridge, it must be remembered, was deeply religious; the mysterious and divine power was always apparent to him. Suddenly a strange suggestion started itself up — an idea represented by two words. They were the words Do and Can. You see they came from those other names, Xamdu and Cublai Can. The great Power and his wondrous deed came in connection with Can and Do — for what else do these words stand for but power and performance? Right there, in connection with the rest, the whole idea of the poem leaped into his mind.

Coleridge, it must be remembered, was a profound student of words, and especially of the ability

of large and abstract words to mislead by their vague significations, double meanings. This way of wrong-reason he had seen in his study of the metaphysicians; and he was always looking closely at words. He fixed their meanings by definition, or reduced ideas to their essentials. It was in line with this sort of wisdom that he used such simple diction in his poems — as witness the "Ancient Mariner." He was always reducing ideas to their ultimate basic words. Do and Can would mean much to Him, occurring together in this way.

And so it is my opinion that Coleridge had somewhat this mental experience, whether he realized it afterwards or not. I was not surprised that his "Kubla Khan" was spelled by Purchas, Cublai *Can*. It was thus that Coleridge saw the word; and Xamdu contained its corollary. Taken in connection with the poetic alliteration of Purchas's opening words, their suggestion of the ballad metre, and Coleridge's ripe-mindedness as the result of his long and deep contemplation of nature and of words, this Do and Can, this expression of deed and power, would be the very poetic suggestion which could take his contemplated

brook poem and lift it straight up into a picture of Creation.

Think of all the latent poetry in those few prose words, not forgetting the alliteration of the *d*'s and the hard *c*'s.

In Xamdu did Cublai Can —

Coleridge took them just as they stood, changing Xamdu to Xanadu for the sake of the metre. And of all the titles he might have given the poem, he put at the head of it simply those two words — Xanadu and Kubla Khan.

The above is merely a little speculation on my part, in view of the fact that he first submitted the poem as a "psychological curiosity." And now we come to the formal, and undeniable proof, that my way of seeing "Kubla Khan" was Coleridge's own. I shall show that the details of my interpretation, the separate meanings in each symbol, are what he intended; and he shall be his own authority. To take up all of them would require a volume or two, for the reason that I would have to refer to other poems; and as the bulk of Coleridge is not half understood, I would find myself under the necessity of opening his whole mind

and work for the first time. In this state of affairs I have decided as follows. The reader who finds himself unable to believe that "Kubla Khan" is what I say it is takes most exception, probably, to my saying that the fountain represents physical life in terms of the heart. This, no doubt, is what struck him as being the most far-fetched and ridiculous. Next to that, I think, my interpretation of the "caves of ice" struck him as being a mere gratuitous foisting of a meaning upon the poet in order to piece out an ingenious *tour de force*. Here is where he thought I strained my mind to the point of intellectual contortion. If, then, I can show, beyond a doubt, that the strangest figures, such as these, are authentic in the interpretation, they will naturally carry the more obvious parts in their train; especially as they all fit together. I shall now take up these more difficult parts.

First, the heart-beating fountain. Coleridge wrote a short poem called "A Sunset." It has always been considered mere nonsense verse. This poem was found in the Malta note-book, dated August 16, 1805. With it was the poet's memorandum that they were written as "nonsense verses, merely to try a metre; but they are by no means contempt-

ible." This statement that they are, notwithstanding, "by no means contemptible" is Coleridge's considerable opinion that they are not meaningless, if understood; which, indeed, they are not. What, then, is their meaning?

On the *opposite* page was his poem, —

WHAT IS LIFE?

Resembles life what once was deemed of light,
Too ample in itself for human sight?
An absolute self — an element ungrounded —
All that we see, all colors of all shade
By encroach of darkness made? —
Is very life by consciousness unbounded?
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,
A war-embrace of wrestling life and death?

The meaning of this poem, I hope, is plain enough to anybody. Those who recall the controversy between the adherents of Newton and those of Goethe, in their conflicting theories as to the nature of color, will apprehend it most readily. Darkness, according to the theory, was not the mere absence of light; it was an entity in itself; and color was the result of an action set up between darkness and light in various degree. Coleridge saw here a chance to express beautifully the idea which we have regarding immortality.

Death, that darkness which we enter into, is not a mere absence of life; it is really another state of existence. That which we enter into by way of Death and seeming dark oblivion, is another state of activity; the darkness is not the mere negative, no-life state that it might seem. And this which we call life is only a half-life state; a phantasmagoria of appearances and deluding colors; but we shall enter afterwards into a positive state of existence.

When we consider that it was an unsettled question whether Goethe's theory of color was right, among certain scientists, at least; this was not a bad comparison, or way of expression. I do not know whether this poem is among the many that are a mystery or not — anyway I have explained it.

Now, underneath this poem in the Malta notebook was the comment, "Written in the same manner and for the same purpose, but of course with more consciousness than the two stanzas on the preceding leaf." The stanzas on the preceding leaf were the poem "A Sunset," which I previously mentioned. If, then, the " What is Life?" was written " in the same manner and for the same

purpose" as the other, and we wish to know something about the other, let us turn to it and see what connection there might be. A mere glance, to any one who has half an eye for poetry, makes the message of "A Sunset" apparent. It is a poem on Death. One poem compared life to color; the other represents death as the coming on of darkness. This is conveyed in a most pointed way in the description of the going down of the sun — "Abrupt as Spirits vanish, he is sunk." The next line speaks of a "soul-like breeze" — and so it goes. There is a description of the breeze moving among the trees. This was the passing of the soul, and this was Coleridge's way of intimating the omnipresence of the life principle in nature, the spirit which is of God, in distinction from mere physical life which is its form. In fact, we have the same thing here which we had in that atmosphere of the Chasm in "Kubla Khan." Here is the second stanza, —

> Abrupt as Spirits vanish, he is sunk !
> A soul-like breeze possesses all the wood.
> The boughs, the sprays, have stood
> As motionless as stands the ancient trunk !
> But every leaf through all the forest flutters
> And deep the cavern of the fountain mutters.

This would be capable of extended comment, but our business is with the last line. Why did the cavern of the fountain mutter? Because this is the fountain of life, the same as in "Kubla Khan." And the cavern mutters because the fountain has gone down and is rumbling at its source; it is death. I believe I may let this argument rest here as proof absolute that the fountain in "Kubla Khan" was rightly explained. I might, of course, point out that the fountain metaphor is used in Coleridge a score of times; that it frequently refers to life; that he wrote of his "Inscription for a Fountain on a Heath," that "This fountain is an exact emblem of what Mrs. Gillman was by nature," and so on, but it is, I hope,unnecessary.

Second, the "caves of ice." Coleridge wrote a longer poem called "The Blossoming of the Solitary Date Tree." This poem, I believe, is not understood; I can find no explanation of it anywhere. The poem is an expression of the deeply human desire to *be understood.* The desire for expression may be said, I think, to be the master passion of the human race; we like to see our thoughts arrive back to us in the intelligent words and countenances of others. We are socia-

ble beings, and we long for intimate communion with our fellows. Far deeper is the pleasure of meeting a person congenial by nature — one who knows already the thing we are about to say. He has been to the same fount of universal truth; and so, in dealing with him we are not laboring in the unreliable realm of mere words; we are perfectly assured that he understands.

Now Coleridge never finished this poem. Only two stanzas are wanting, and the substance of these he has set down in prose. This prose, he tells us, might be used as a basis for the completion of the work by some "congenial spirit" in time to come. "It is not impossible," he tells us, that such a person might arrive. The sub-title of this poem is "A Lament." It begins thus, —

"Beneath the blaze of a tropical sun the mountain peaks are the Thrones of Frost, through the absence of objects to reflect the rays. 'What no one with us shares seems scarce our own.'"

He is here saying simply that a man who is a high and earnest thinker finds himself in a pitiable plight in this world. Having attained a point where he can see things comprehensively, and where in all simplicity he can look God in the

face, he finds himself alone. The world does not understand him. This coldness, this heart-chill which strikes so deeply into his nature, is that feeling of separation from his fellows. They are unable to understand that which they have never concerned themselves about. In his warm desire to impart the simple and comprehensive truths, he speaks to them; but only to find that not a ray of intelligence is returned. Nothing is *reflected*. This is the nature of that coldness which a man experiences on the intellectual heights.

No one could feel it more keenly than Coleridge, for he was of a remarkably warm, humane, sociable disposition. He was not one of those naturally cold, high, and mighty egotists, who are willing to stand apart on their mountain of thought, entirely content with their mere prominence and distinction. That was the reason he did not write more; he loved to talk. He was warmed by human companionship, intellectual communion; he preferred to mingle and converse, to lecture and preach, to express himself directly; he wanted to have some profitable effect on his own generation. He candidly avowed that he was not essentially a mere writer. He

warmed under human touch. And yet he was but little understood. He was the intellectual marvel of his time — but not fully comprehended.

And so he expresses it by this figure of speech. We see, then, that my interpretation of "caves of ice," as having to do with high altitudes of thought; and my explanation that this coldness was due to the absence of objects to reflect; and my application of this to reflection in its other sense of contemplative thought, was exactly correct. In this present poem he is using the same symbol, expressing himself in the same way. It cannot be misunderstood. It conveys the idea in a way that is peculiarly satisfactory; it is concrete, tangible, full of substance beyond mere abstract words. This is the very basis of all true poetry.

It is probably unnecessary for me to carry this irksome "proof" of a self-evident poem to any greater length. In closing, I must apologize to the intelligent reader for having carried it out to such extremes of obviousness as I have. With the majority of my readers, it is, I hope, unnecessary. But it must be remembered, in extenuation, that Coleridge has been read for a hundred and thirteen years; he has been the subject of count-

less monographs, the object of study and research by many literary authorities, some of whom have made a specialty of him; he has, in short, been read by thousands of people of culture — poets, essayists, critics — not to speak of the million or so who have read "Kubla Khan" in school and college. For me to come forth and say that no one has understood or appreciated the poem fully, and to intimate, also, that Coleridge has not been understood in general, is, to say the least, an embarrassing task. I would not have undertaken it at such length, or indeed have submitted any "proof" at all, had I not been advised to do so by literary authority for whose judgment I have respect.

As the reader no doubt knows, much of Coleridge's poetry is considered "obscure." In any large public library may be found twelve or fifteen volumes containing monographs upon Coleridge by modern writers. Beyond the usual few, *traditional* sentences regarding "Christabel" and the "Ancient Mariner," a reader will look in vain for any light upon the poetry itself. There has been an endless multiplication of opinion regarding opium and family ethics, but nothing about that

work which makes Coleridge of such perennial importance. This is a strange state of affairs. In his preface, Coleridge declares that poetry "impersonates high and abstract truths," is not therefore obscure. He disclaims any intent of mystification or obscurity. He says flatly, "The deficiency is in the reader." As for me, I prefer to believe Coleridge. He had utter disdain for a poem without "sense"; he says so more than once. Why he is considered obscure I do not know. A man who simply speaks truth ought to be easily understood; but probably that is the reason he is not.

I think that, considering the completely fuddled state of mind of the present times — the predicament of religion, the conjuration with the word "science," a new superstition, the lack of taste for poetry and the too evident confusion of mind as to what poetry is — I think, I say, that Coleridge contains much to be thought over.

What, for instance, will be the "poetry of the future"? Will it not, in view of our scientific spirit, as properly understood, have to be the poetry of Truth? And that in its strictest sense? Is not science, which is to say knowledge, a true

basis for poetry and a thing that may be expressed? Will it not be a sort of Goethean poetry — the Good, the Beautiful, and the True — but with Coleridgian condensation to suit our American spirit? Has any English poet ever lived who demonstrated so well as Coleridge that truth and scientific fact may be treated without didacticism; and not only that, but put into poetry which is poetry in the most *æsthetic* sense?

There is this peculiarity about his work. A man must learn truth earnestly, with all his mind and soul, and *then* come to him. He does not exist to teach truth in poetry, but to *express* it. He must be understood wholly or not at all. He does not court any half understanding, does not want it. It is impossible to search him out by any puzzle-working methods or mere literary industry. Poe could not have understood Coleridge in a thousand years. He was too shallow. The profoundly simple is the only key to him. In those things which must most deeply affect the life of any nation, — religion, — we have, after an "orgy of intellect," got along to almost the point where the world was a hundred years ago. We have a plenty of "science," but do not know what to do

with it. It is surprising to see Coleridge answering the very questions which now concern us. He is the poet of the profoundly simple. Goethe said, "The world is annoyed to find the truth so simple." I consider this the most highly informed remark he made in the whole two volumes of "Wilhelm Meister."

The philosophical proof. To minds of a certain cast, a more philosophic treatment of the matter might be desirable. I shall indicate it briefly.

Coleridge's analysis of the Prometheus of Æschylus is a wonderful piece of criticism, or rather literary expounding. In explaining this poem, in which the divine "spark" was stolen from Heaven, he says:—

"The generation of the νοῦς, or pure reason in man. 1. It was superadded or infused, *a supra*, to mark that it was no mere evolution of the animal basis;—that is, could not have grown out of the other faculties of man, his life, sense, understanding, as the flower grows out of the stem, having existed potentially in the seed. 2. The νοῦς, or fire, was 'stolen,' to mark its *hetero* or rather its *allo*-geneity, that is, its diversity, its differ-

ence in kind, from the faculties which are common to man with the nobler animals; 3. And stolen 'from Heaven'—to mark its superiority in kind, as well as its essential diversity; 4. And it was a 'spark'—to mark that it is not subject to any modifying reaction from that on which it immediately acts. . . ."

Note in the above that the *νοῦς* could not have grown out of the *understanding*—out of "his life, sense, understanding." It is entirely different in its nature; and this is man's mark of superiority, his title to immortality.

A little farther on he says: "For the soul, or understanding, if it be defined physiologically as the principle of sensibility, irritability and growth, together with the functions of the organs which are at once the representatives and instruments of these, must be considered *in genere*, though not in degree or dignity, common to man and the inferior animals. It was the spirit, the *nous* which man alone possessed."

The reader has probably anticipated the point to which I am coming. He sees plainly enough why I said that the fragments thrown up by the fountain (of physical life) were thoughts in a

lower sense. This was the understanding. And why Coleridge took up thought in a higher sense, in a separate division of the poem — where it was utterly separate, different, having nothing whatever to do with that mental action which is the product of the fountain. For this is νοῦς — spirit. He represented the understanding as being thrown up by the fountain — the "physiological" as he has just called it — because that is a faculty we share with the lower animals; and his showing it in such intimate connection with life as an organism indicated that fact. He is, in short, expressing in this poem of "Kubla Khan," that philosophy. I think the intelligent reader will hardly desire more of me by way of "proof" that I know the meaning of "Kubla Khan," and that it is the one Coleridge put into it.

V

THE STUDY OF GRAMMAR

THE STUDY OF GRAMMAR

I WAS a roomer, unheated, and rather too much alone: the "For Rent" sign was kept behind the wash-stand. Before me was the problem of spending my evenings on metropolitan streets. It was not long till I realized that a city is a place where without money you may not deviate from a straight line. Miles of glass front!—it all looks too real. Poverty regards it as a mere picture, a scenery of vestments and viands along the road to work; but as for me, it was too realistically done; it reminded me of my own dear departed shirts and shoes. I could stroll up and down past the various departments of Having and Being; I could stand and stare like the wax-ladies and gentlemen who look through the pane at their rivals on the street; I could submit myself as a specimen under this focal glare of glass, and have my poverty magnified. All this is in the evening. In the morning, with the sand of sleep in one's

eyes it is not so bad, — a mere *lusus naturæ* along the route of the innumerable caravan, but in the evening it is different. This glass was made to think through — a dream which may not be broken.

I know all about these things because I was "financially embarrassed." It is all intended for people who are engaged in making a choice. In that case the interminable gallery is of interest; you can survey your future household from China to Peru. But if your progress has been in the other direction, there is little warmth in the unsold overcoat, no comfort in the bath-robe, the meerschaum, the gold-plated bed. Evenings are poorly spent in contemplating them. If your soul was made to lie down in green pastures, do not spend your time looking over the fence.

I took my own good advice; I went back to the bedroom. I sat looking at the bed, the washstand, and the wall-paper. Ah! the wall-paper! I guess it was this that turned my mind inward. My only experience with the Emersonian advice of "Room alone and keep a journal" had been in the middle of a Texas prairie under the stars in space; and that is really room. In the present

emergency I did not keep a journal; I wanted to forget it, and so I bought a pipe. But I soon found that smoke is a poor material to fill Space with. It was a much larger space than one would suppose I could get into so small a room. I smoked imaginatively while I rearranged the contents of my valise and did suchlike housework. Thus busied about my little establishment, I found, upon looking to see what the lower part of the wash-stand might be like, a book. It had belonged to some school child and had been through a second-hand bookstore; it was all annotated with "Take Tuesday," or "Take Friday"; and on the inside of the cover was the rubber-stamp advertisement of the old-book dealer.

Such was our casual meeting. Without even the formality of making a resolution, good, bad or indifferent, I sat down and became occupied in reading. "I am loved, thou art loved, he is loved; I have been loved, thou hast been loved, he has been loved, I was loved, thou wast loved, he was loved; I had been loved, thou hadst been loved, he had been loved—" A man will read even an advertisement when crossing the desert. The sands of my desert would have filled the hour-

glasses of eternity. My destination was bed; but I had not yet arrived at the point where I could step off the train of thought, and so I kept on reading, as it were: "If I were loved, if thou wert loved, if he were loved; if we were loved, if you were loved, if they were loved." When the machinery of thought is thus started up it almost runs itself. In some way this automatic prose set the wheels of my mind a-going, and I branched off on my own account.

Language is a queer sort of thing when you come to think about it. Something happened to you last week or last month in a distant place; and now, being at home again from your travels, you wish to take that event out of the past, set it down right here and now, and *show* it. Now *that* is a problem in transportation. The event is past; the objects you did not bring with you; so how are you going to do it? Easily enough in these days. Man takes the world about in his mind. His head is another globe, which he carries Atlas-like on his shoulders. The dictionary is a catalogue of the universe. All the denizens of Creation have been taught to appear and disappear like phantoms in obedience to established sounds;

you can open your mouth and produce anything under heaven. You carry all objects and every possible happening about with you; it is the annihilation of time and space. You can manufacture a past event in an instant, for language-machinery plies word upon word in accordance with the mechanism of nature; it works the same. It has *got* to work the same, else it could not fulfill its purpose of reproducing events.

Immediately I formed an idea of what grammar is. It takes language to pieces and shows you how it works. I picked the book up again and started with much interest upon the part headed "Conjunctions." The information was set forth shortly in the space of a page and a half, and suddenly I came to the end without having caught the idea. I read it over several times to discover what it was I had missed; but though the book raised its voice in half a dozen different sizes of type it did not succeed in making me understand.

This mental deafness rather annoyed me. It was all set down in chapter and verse — italics, black-letter, plain type and capitals; no pains had been spared. Language had evidently been taken to pieces, — a mere glance at the state of the page

showed that, — and the parts had all been sorted out and numbered as if somebody had had the intention of putting it together again. As it was, it could not show me how the wheels went round, and I was curious to know. I was disappointed in the book. I saw at once that all I needed was another grammar — one written by some writer who had a different way of saying it. This book had served its purpose, however: I put on my hat and went out. I had conceived the idea of improving my mind.

The bookstore man, a quaint old volume himself, lit a lantern and led the way to the cellar where he had other store of books. Down there he had a mine of them. It was a regular grammar hecatombs; I never knew before that so many men had written grammars. They were surprisingly cheap; he was willing to let a number of the more dilapidated copies go at five cents per volume. There were ancient calf-bound grammars of which the very leather was dog-eared, and paste-board-and-paper-covered grammars of the middle period of school-books, and cloth-bound varieties which had been more recently discarded by the schools. I could see, from cer-

tain bundles of reading matter which were ready to go by the pound, that this collection was in a dubious stand between junk and books. The old man and I went along with the lantern, trying to find an honest grammar. Finally I selected one of the latest improved grammars at fifteen cents, and bore it away.

Back in the bedroom again I opened my own grammar and bent my mind upon it. It stated as follows: "A Conjunction is a word used to connect words, sentences, and parts of sentences. There are two kinds — Coördinate and Subordinate. Coördinate conjunctions are those which join elements of the same rank or name. They are divided into Additive, denoting similars (also, likewise, and, moreover); Adversative, joining opposites (but, yet, still, however); Disjunctive, denoting alternatives (or, either, nor, neither); and Illative, implying a consequence or inference (hence, so, then, accordingly). Subordinate Conjunctions are those which join elements of different ranks or names. They are divided into classes — Causal (if, unless, except, because, since, although, etc.); Temporal (ere, after, whilst, when, etc.); Local (where, whence, thither); of

Manner or Degree (as, as if, how, although, so as)."

I studied these words solicitously; but I did not get my fifteen cents' worth. I knew considerable Latin, having studied it a few weeks in public school, and so I understood plainly enough that a disjunctive conjunction is a word which joins apart. In fact, I understood it all as far as the words went; but I felt there was still something I would like to know — What is a conjunction? This sort of information, I felt, would be quite satisfactory and sufficient if I wanted to teach it. But mine was a different case; I wanted to know it. I tried to get it clear that night; but I went to bed in the dark. I had come to the font of learning with my thirst all ready; but though I tried every faucet I could not get a drop.

The next night I came home with quite an armful of grammars. I had been down into the mine again; and this time the old man let me take the lantern and do my own excavating. Having them on the table, I lit the lamp and sat down to them. As to that first selection, I supposed I had merely struck the wrong teacher;

I would find a man among all this number who had a way of taking hold of the subject. All I needed was to catch the idea. But now I found it even more difficult to locate. Here was a grammarian who thought the term Additive more fitting than Copulative; another preferred Alternative to describe certain ones which had been called Disjunctive; another saw that they were not truly Subordinate Conjunctions but should be called Subordinat*ing:* another went into finer divisions in his subordinates — of cause, of result, of purpose, of condition, of concession, of manner, of time, of comparison. They were at least extremely conscientious in their work, not wanting children to jump at wrong conclusions from Illative or Copulative. This was the only difference between them — a sort of family difference. They all stood together on the main issue, whatever that was. As I pursued grammatical information, I was introduced to a most discouraging state of affairs among the parts of speech. Conjunctions, adverbs, adverbial conjunctions and prepositions are different classes of words, different parts of speech; but when you study the lists of words that are given to make you familiar

with each class, you find the same words first in one list and then in the other. Certain words go masquerading about in any list at all. They do not care what part of speech they are. And you, finding them as examples of each class, can only come to the conclusion that conjunctions are adverbs and adverbs are prepositions. I was never so confused since the time I learned the alphabet off the apron of a cast-iron stove and noted that the same letter was sometimes N and sometimes Z, according to which door you came through. Here is where the grammarian finds his work cut out for him; and he uses many large words — on the principle, probably, that these little words, such as *up*, *down*, *whence*, *thence*, can be whipped into line and overawed. The terminology did not help matters, however, and I was prone to remark that the road to ignorance is paved with big words. And all roads lead to Rome.

Having put my hand to conjunctions, I was not going to turn back. I became more determined when I found that in order to know a complex sentence you have to know a subordinate conjunction. Seeking further I found that the way to know a subordinate conjunction is to

look and see if the verbs and nouns make a complex sentence! By this time the science, or art, or profession, of grammar had me metaphorically standing on my head. It was all the more aggravating when I reflected that a school child could "pass 100" on it while I, who had read Herbert Spencer in the original, was completely fuddled. I deeply realized my ignorance in the presence of so much opportunity. And I had learned it all in school, too! I resolutely set myself to the work of understanding. But I did not find "the beginning of wisdom." I was confident, though, that if I once got hold of the end I could unravel several yards of it. It was all the more serious because I might not be able to tell the difference between a complex and a compound sentence.

My grammars, otherwise alike, had certain little polite differences among themselves; but as for me, I was not included in the conversation. During the day I had consulted the stenographer's Webster, that bishop of books, and I had been informed that a conjunction is "a connective or connecting word," and that it is undeclinable. Upon further investigation I saw that this defini-

tion would serve equally well for a relative pronoun or a preposition or almost any word in that way; they all connect. Between them all I was not let into the secret. Right there I moved my chair back to the middle of the room and asked myself flatly, in upper case and italics — *What IS a conjunction?*

Conjunctions are the words by means of which we reason together. Not till man invented conjunctions could he open his mouth as a lawyer, a scientist, a statesman, a thinker. Without them we could not argue. Language would be reduced to mere narrative and statement and command — a mere record of happenings, and nothing of your intelligent conclusions. Everything would be orthodox; there would be no exchange of ideas — nothing of your perception of the relations of things. These little words are the keys to the storehouse of thought; by them the world's great thinkers have unlocked our minds and delivered the treasures of knowledge. By them we show ourselves philosophers. A Republic has great need of conjunctions. Other words, such as prepositions and relatives, show relations between particular words or things; conjunctions alone can show the

relation between whole statements, whole processes: they marshal the words into regiments and manœuvre them; they are the lieutenant-generals of the parts of speech.

Man's first and easiest words were the names of things and of activities. Those half-abstract words, prepositions, he would very soon feel the need of. Finally, language began to develop means of expressing logic — words to knit the statements together. Right there conjunctions began to make their appearance. It was the grand climacteric in the history of the human mind. Friedrich von Schlegel died with the word "but" on his lips. What grander, what nobler word would a deep-thinking, truth-loving German wish to die with! In such a word man first stepped forth in the true image of his Creator. "God's doors are men." Conjunctions are the key.

Thus I saw it. In some such general way, wordlessly except as reason stood vividly forth as my sudden conception, — for this that I am trying to put in words was twenty-one years ago, — I became really interested in the mechanism of language. And when I reflected that philosophy defines reason as being the perception of likenesses and

differences, I understood why and in what way a conjunction "connects." Immediately I took an interest in all conjunctions, despite the grammarian's latinish names for them; they were just what one might expect and look for, who knows what reason is.

So fascinated was I with this idea that grammar is reason, — simply nature and human nature in their deepest and simplest guise, — that I now applied myself with ardor to the books. Each evening I hurried home to them. One night, after much pondering of the conjugations, I heard the auxiliaries saying just what they say — a point of view which, I believe, is now generally accepted by philosophic grammarians. I shall never cease to think of them just as they struck me then: they are a strange sort of elemental poetry revealing the very nature of the Gothic mind. Some barbarian forefather of ours once had a difficult problem to solve. It beset his mind as a puzzle and a very perplexing one, for the way of saying what he wanted to tell had not yet been invented. With that baffled feeling of something-or-other which wanted words, he looked deeply inward to make up his mind exactly what it was, and then

he said, "I possess come." Of course, when we now say, "I have come," it does not sound so strange: we are used to it. To *have*, however, means to *possess*, and when he said, "I have finished," or "I have felt," or "I have loved," he meant it. He felt and saw that when anything takes place in a man's life it passes into his being; it belongs to him; it has become a part of his mind — his memories and imaginations, his conscience and character, his sorrows and his joys; he *has* it beyond refusal. He did not invent the form as one who thinks of grammar, but as a man who perceives truth. And it was very well said.

When we say, "Yesterday John *was* hurt," we are saying what would sound as follows, if we only heard ourselves, "Yesterday John existed hurt." The verb *be* (*was*, *is*, *am*, *were*, *are*) means to exist; and the Goth meant what he said. By this simple means he expressed the passive — that which had happened and which could only be borne. *Have* and *be*, in their various forms, serve the same function, except that one is active and the other passive; and by various combinations of them, what a host of significations we are enabled to convey! We say, He is loved, I am

loved, I have loved, I had loved, I have been loved, I shall be loved, I shall have been loved, etc. What grammatical wonders he worked with the forms of these words meaning to live and to possess, the most important facts in his experience. *Be* and *have* — these are the words for life and property.

The Greek and Latin did not have this matter-of-fact idea of saying such things in separate words. For example, the Latin for love being *amo*, the expression for *we were loved* is *amabamur* — the whole concept in one word. It is the word *amo*, with an ending or inflection to denote all the rest. For each of the many meanings the ending would have to vary. The idea of *be* they used only in certain tenses: *have* they had no notion of. The difference then is, that the modern language adds to the verb certain words from the language itself, while the Latin or Greek had inflections or endings which were not words from the language.

It was no small problem in language to get a way of denoting past, present, and future acts, and to do it not only from the present standpoint, but also to express each of them from past or future

standpoints; and also to show them as active or passive, positive or doubtful — may, can, might, would, or should. Consider the conjugation of a regular verb, extending over several pages of a grammar — as it were the multiplication-tables of language! The Latin, because of the method of saying it all in a word with the artifice of endings, was under the necessity of having several sets of them so that the ending would flow into any word at all. Thus he had four conjugations instead of one — the A, E, I and consonantal, with variations. It is this we have to labor over when we modern barbarians conquer Rome again. The Greek, with a still more æsthetic ear and intellect, is confusion twice confounded. In English we do not have to learn the conjugation. It is plain talk — all words. Our Teutonic forefather, as we see, accomplished wonders with his notion of *have*, and with his *was*, *am*, *is* — short words, as if intended for quick action. Like the Irishman who destroyed "sivin at a blow," he killed off all necessity for extra conjugations, and made his one conjugation simple talk. And his way of doing it with his "possess gone" I consider the highest (because the most elemental) form of poetry.

And it is very Germanic, because it would make you think twice to decide whether he did it as a poet, a philosopher, or a plain practical man. He accomplished it all with these two words, assisted by *shall* to show futurity, and *ed* (a sort of shortened *did*) to show the past. *Shall* originally meant to owe — it was so used in early English. Now certainly, next in importance to what a man *has* is what he owes. Our ancestor, with his Teutonic gift of truth-telling, was a very plain man. Who would suppose that his straightforward way of coming at things could ever be made into so learned and non-understandable a thing as Grammar!

And then came that evening when I encountered prepositions. My grammars informed me that a preposition is "a word which comes before a noun," and that the term is derived from two Latin words, *ponere* meaning to place, and *præ* meaning before. None of them neglected to say this; and it sounded like final proof. The definition was substantially the same in all of them. "A preposition is a word which is placed before a noun to show some relation between the person or thing named and some other word in the sentence."

One grammar said *a* relation, another *the* relation, another *some* relation, but none told *what* relation. This did not satisfy me. It sounded as if some one were to say that a horse is a thing which comes before a wagon. I read each of my grammars carefully, hopefully, I might say, to find out what relation a preposition showed; but I discovered that this information was not to be had in any of them. It seemed to me that this was the important thing to know. *Some* relation is hardly information.

Not being able to find out I turned to the definition again to study it more closely, more as a whole. I then observed that it was not true. A preposition does not come before a noun necessarily, nor before anything: as, for instance — "What is that *for?*" A little experiment showed me another fact. Suppose we have a preposition (*to*, *from*, *with*, *on*), and a noun following it, as, *in* water. If you add an adjective, the adjective will always push the preposition aside, because an adjective belongs directly before a noun while a preposition does not, as, in *deep* water. I thus saw that the definition was untrue in its first part, and merely an evasion in its second half. Even though it was derived from *præ* and *ponere*, the facts were

the same. "Placed before a noun" is more true of an adjective than of a preposition.

Somewhat puzzled, I decided it were better not to examine any particular statement in this strict way: I ought to try to gather the idea from the chapter as a whole. I did so; and learned as follows: "In the sentence, *The ship sails on salt water*, the word *on* is a preposition. Its object is water. It shows the relation between the verb *sails* and the noun *water*. The word *water* is its object, and is in the Objective Case. *On*, and what follows it, is an adverbial modifier. Sometimes the preposition can refer back to an adjective, an adverb, a noun or a pronoun: and when it refers to a noun preceding it the prepositional phrase is an Adjective Modifier." This is the whole of grammar regarding the preposition and its object.

I soon learned all there was to be learned, very thoroughly; I could apply all the terms in any of the grammars without error; I knew all there was in the books upon the subject; I could have defied the most thorough "examination." There were certain things, however, which I saw I did not know. I did not know what a preposition is, nor what it does, nor why it does it. I did not know

what this was all about. I could use prepositions quite as well before I read this information. I now knew a lot of verbiage and did not know what it was good for, if, indeed, it was good for anything. Having started out with the idea that grammar is common sense applied to natural facts in language, I was not satisfied. I wanted to find out something which would seem to be knowledge; I did not care for fine-sounding words. I felt that there must be something about a preposition which is *true*. In the grammar was a complete list of prepositions, and these I looked over carefully. Then I pushed the book away and asked myself — What *is* a preposition?

It was not a great while till I received the answer; and when I did, I was astonished. Later, when I looked into the preposition historically, I marveled even more. Recalling this, it occurs to me that the whole story is interesting; and as I have never seen the strange adventures of the preposition brought under one point of view, I shall take a little space here to set down the principal facts, beginning in some imaginary Year One. Language is a thing we cannot see because it is too near to us, being, in truth, a part of us; and so there

is an advantage in holding it off at a distance and then drawing it closer. By doing this, I shall be able to communicate how the preposition looked to me the first time I saw it. It will interrupt my own story, but I do not mind that!

Looking at our language, we find a certain set of little words—*for*, *to*, *with*, *at*, *by*, *of*, *instead of*, *on*, *from*, etc.; and occasionally a longer expression which seems to belong together, such as *according to*. These words were in the beginning a great problem, a puzzle; indeed, they baffled the mind of man for ages after they came into service. A tribe of primitive men, in their efforts to establish a language, had no great difficulty, I imagine, with certain kinds of words — names of visible things, or definite acts and feelings. But a man who was finding names for such things would hardly think at once of getting up such a word as *of*. The idea which is so familiar to us from continual use would hardly seem, to him, a very promising subject for a name. The top *of* a hill, for instance, is simply the hill. This is quite a different matter from such words as *tree* or *jump*. Primitive man would not suppose there was such a thing as an *at* or an *of* in existence; how would

he ever suspect it? These are words which merely show relations between things, and some of them are rather puzzling; they are in the nature of abstract or general ideas. History would seem to show that the absence of these very useful words would strike one as a mere wordless blank, a difficulty to be got around in some other way than by a word. However, not much can be said without them in some form or other: they belong to the very mechanism of things, and so they soon began to make their appearance. Such words as *against*, *across*, *through*, *below*, *from*, and so on, added themselves to speech, and the sentence began to be a very efficient machine of statement.

These words were at first limited to meanings that were actual — apparent to the eye. *By* would mean beside or near to, and nothing more; *with* would have the meaning of along with, in company of, and nothing beyond that real state of affairs. But there is another use of prepositions which was long in developing. In English there is, for each preposition, an actual, original meaning, and one or more poetical or figurative uses which we are so accustomed to that we do not

regard them as poetical uses at all. When we say a book is laid *upon* the table, we are using upon in its original sense. When we say a man spoke upon a subject it is a figurative use: it is a poetical way of expression which depicts him as planting himself, mentally, upon a fundament of thought. When we say that a ship went *about*, we mean that she actually went round; and when we say a man talked *about* politics we are using the original word in a way which carries the idea of his going round it mentally and talking it all over. One is the actual, the other figurative or poetical. When we say a tree stands *by* the house, we mean actually near, next to, beside, the house; and when we say an act was done *by* John, we are managing to say a difficult and abstract thing in a very true way; it was done at the side of, which is to say by the hand of, John. Thus the sense of *by* was established; and when we say the earth is warmed by the sun, or salt is dissolved by water, we see that the word carries that sense of instrumentality to any extent that is required of it. Language shows us that we are very simple creatures: we can learn or understand that which is very concrete — reduced to simple elemental facts.

(A careful study of English is better than a work on pedagogy.)

Now this figurative use of such words was the peculiar gift of the north-European peoples — the Germanic or Teutonic family of languages, of which English is one. Each of these uses was a very original and striking performance in its day, — the masterpiece of some imaginative, close-thinking person; but we are so accustomed to them that we hardly think of these one-word poems by which we carry on conversation. For certain reasons, which we shall come to, it is well worth our time to take note of the poetry of the "particles." A great deal of trouble for the human family has arisen out of a lack of the ability to know such simple things. I think one or two more examples will be worth while, to illustrate thoroughly. We say that a man fought *with* a sword, and little realize that here was a difficult thing to name; for what definite conception may be formed of this relation so that it would apply to all such cases? *With*, in its primary sense, means accompanying, in company of, along with; and so the word represents the man as fighting in company of the sword: they did it together. Thus we have

two words for instrumentality, *with* and *by;* the first relating to the actor and the second to the means; as, *The man was killed by John with a sword.*

There are some fifty of these prepositions, as usually accounted, and a full examination of them would display a wonderful wealth of meaning. Some of these meanings would puzzle us to account for: it takes imagination, a sort of psychology, to perceive their intent. *For* means in place of; it represents actual substitution, as when we say we gave an apple *for* a pear; a man worked *for* a dollar. Here I think we can see the exchange of one thing for another. We do a thing *for* a person, and here we still see that it means in place of. A man ran *for* a street-car, another ran *for* office. And now what do we mean? Language grew poetically from very practical and concrete ideas (as true poetry always does), and so we can only conclude here that the word says the same as ever. The man exchanged a certain amount of exertion for his arrival at the street-car or the legislature. This is so plain that the words "to get" have been dropped out in practice, although the old form was, for example, "I am

going *for to get* it." As it is written in the prophets, "You can't get something for nothing" — a very Teutonic fact. We are a plain-spoken people.

Neither the Greeks nor the Romans had this full, free use of prepositions. And, strange to say, neither did the early English, — a language which sprang from the speech of those northern peoples whom Rome first knew as barbarians and "heathen." Prepositions they all had, truly, for these are in the very nature of things. But the words were used in the more actual or physical sense. Those other ideas which we express by them were conveyed by means of *endings* added to the words to which the meaning applied. These endings were not words taken from the language: they were purely inflections, or added sounds of a letter or two at the end of a word. Our use of prepositions for these other purposes is of comparatively recent origin. English was quite fully inflected before the time of Chaucer; and the passing out of this system of expression by means of endings had not reached its conclusion even in his day.

It is a strange thought that the finished speech

of rhetorical Rome, and the yet finer language of the cultured Greek, had the same mode of expression, of basic syntax, as the speech of the Teutons, — those wild men of the woods, — and that this has now passed out. Scholars are generally agreed that for subtlety and exactitude in communicating ideas the Greek has not been surpassed. It had more scope and precision than Latin; it carried inflection to a high pitch of discrimination. Greek has not only a singular and a plural, but also a dual number: its inflection would show whether a "they" which is referred to, meant two persons or more than two. Early English (Anglo-Saxon) had the dual number also. Before me is a Maori grammar — one intended for missionaries and mercenaries. These naked islanders had the dual number also, in pronouns. Laplander and Patagonian are said to have it.

How are we to account for these similarities between the heights of culture and the rudest state of society? Simply, I think, by remembering that the Greeks and Romans themselves rose from the primitive and innocent state of mind. Inflection generally, it seems to me, was the re-

sult of man's early bafflement over certain problems in speech. It occurs in just those points of language which are very abstract and difficult to circumvent. The fact that the Greeks found certain artistic advantages in the method, and developed it highly, makes this simpler origin none the less likely; for language is not the invention of scholars in the beginning. I think I can make this plain. When we say the man ran *to* the house, it is very simple: the *to* in this case was no great problem, being a word for something as definite and demonstrable as the act itself. It is a name for motion — towardness. But when we wish to ask for the lid *to* the bucket or *of* the bucket, it is quite a different matter. What mental picture, what generality, would a man have in mind regarding this *to?* The thing that has to be expressed here is an idea purely, mere relation. And so we can imagine primitive man, who has been giving names to more definite things, puzzling over some lack in his speech and not suspecting that a separate *word* should come in here where there is *nothing*. And if he were a philosophic sort of person he might have objection to putting one there. I can almost see him as he grunts over the

predicament, trying to make his speech complete, and finally hitting upon the method of giving some peculiar vocal twist to the name of the thing itself, and then using this ending in all similar cases. The "case-endings" were hard cases, indeed. This, however, is merely a fancy of my own, and I present it because it helps to elucidate, if not to explain. Whether I am right or not, this was the state of affairs, in fact, with the Greek and Latin, and also with the Teutonic family of languages in their earlier forms. They were inflected to denote such relations.

The Latin had three endings, — the genitive, dative, and ablative by name, — and the three had to do all work of this nature. The genitive alone had to express all that we would convey by secondary uses of *with*, or *by*, or *from*, or *in*. It might seem that it would cause confusion to have but one ending for all this — no distinction whatever between so many significations; and also that it would be impossible to get along with but three endings for all purposes. Certainly it would if these were taking the place of *prepositions* in their actual, mechanical, or physical meaning; for when we wish to say *in* we cannot make out with *from*

or *by*. But it must be remembered that these case-endings take the place of our other *poetical* uses of prepositions only.

This ability of the Latin to get along with so few serves to show how flexible our prepositional meanings are. Take, for instance, the lid *to* a bucket and the lid *of* a bucket. The word *of* has the sense of from, and is the opposite of *to*, and yet either serves to say it. It is all in the point of view. We say a man was killed with a club; but it would be about as well to say that he was killed from a club or of a club, if we were used to looking at the matter in that way. And so, where we have more resources for variety in the use of many prepositions, the Roman would reduce everything to the point of view of his few endings. With three he was able to make out. But there is this difference between such a language and English. As our separate words for all such relations have a concrete or actual meaning from which the secondary meaning is derived poetically, they are subject to imagination and logical examination more than are the purely artificial endings. And so it would behoove us to think of them in that way at times, for the sake of acquaintance with ourselves and

our language. In this matter we see, as we have already seen in the case of *be* and *have* and *shall* (or will), that the Teutonic mind has a faculty of saying in separate words what the Greek or Latin did by inflection. In a sense we more truly *say* this sort of thing; we are more concrete in our methods; and concrete means poetical in the deeper sense of poetical.

Case-endings began to pass out of English in the ninth century; and it is said that the Scandinavian pirates who invaded England in the latter part of the eighth century were the ones who found a way to get along without them. The English are mainly descended from Gothic tribes (Angles and Saxons) and the Norsemen or Scandinavians. The Saxons, belonging in the most northern part of Germany, on the shores of the Baltic, invaded England about the year 450 A. D., and, by forcing back the native inhabitants, made a settlement. These were followed by other adventurers from the Baltic regions who parceled out the land between them, having pushed the original Britons back into the mountains of Wales where they dwell to-day — the Welsh.

All of these rude conquerors were worshipers

of Woden; but in the ninth century they had become Christianized and had made considerable progress in the arts of peace. At this time their bloody brethren from Scandinavia and Denmark, still pagans, came down upon them and wrested away part of the country for their own use. These Norse pirates had for centuries been the terror of Christendom and the despair of the greatest powers: they coasted along in their small boats and made a business of holding up the world, so to speak. Big raw-boned seamen they were, who took down their movable masts and rowed when they could not get away fast enough by wind-power. Skilled in all sorts of tricks with shield and sail and oar, they were the scourge of every port on sea or river, even so far south as the Mediterranean. It is said that when the indomitable Charlemagne saw their boats draw up before Paris he broke down in tears.

When these heathen took part of England away from the Angles and Saxons, it seemed that civilization had been set back three hundred years — back, that is, to what the Saxons themselves had been. From this time, case-endings began to disappear, and the change is supposed to be due

to the Norse influence. Some philologists are of the opinion that English, or Anglo-Saxon, would have outgrown inflection just the same had not these men appeared. But what, let us ask, was the exact nature of the change? When the endings were dropped, something else had to do the work. It was done by a freer use of prepositions: these words had to be used in a new and more poetical way. As we know, such men are always rather free and picturesque in their use of speech — quite non-conservative; and so I am rather of the opinion that the more domesticated and civilized English would not have been so reckless about dropping case-endings overboard. It would probably have taken longer. English is different from all other languages in the matter of "grammar": it stands alone; and we can understand this better when we realize what crude and powerful forces brought it out of inflection before a national literature had sprung up. In the course of a few generations prepositions had gained full sway of certain functions in speech; and since then English has not been burdened with the genitive and dative cases.

But it is one thing to drift into a change like

this, and quite another to know what it is that you have done. Language grows naturally under stress of conditions: it conforms to nature on the one hand and to human nature on the other; its method is anything but a theoretical undertaking. The grammar, the analysis, is undertaken long afterward by the philosophical mind. And if there is one thing which has entirely baffled grammarians, it is the nature of prepositions and such "particles" of speech. A full view of this fact may be had most quickly, I think, by a slight mention of the work of Horne Tooke.

In 1786, the whole output of the English grammarians having proved futile and unsatisfactory, Horne Tooke brought out the first of his two famous volumes on the parts of speech. He had an idea. He thought that the way to determine the nature of the particles was to trace them back to the beginning and see what sort of words they were derived from. To the preposition he devoted over a hundred and fifty pages. In clearing the way for himself, he gives consideration to the various definitions of prepositions, "which for two thousand years have passed for learning throughout the world"; he covers the ground

from Aristotle to his own time; his pages are devoted to the examination of definitions by a host of writers, and filled with his knowledge of the Gothic tongues and French and Greek and Latin. He shows, easily enough, that they are definitions which do not define, and thinks it no wonder that "poor Scaliger" (the famous Greek scholar) despaired of grammatical definitions. He shows that each attempt, like Harris's, "might as well serve for a definition of the East India Company, as of a preposition." I daresay Horne Tooke's polyglot pages are not much perused to-day, but whatever may be their interest to the modern scholar, he succeeded in one thing at least, and that was in showing that no one in the world had ever been able to tell what a preposition is.

And did he succeed in solving the problem himself? Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature says: "As respects the English Language he was considered to have been successful; and his knowledge of the Northern languages, no less than his liveliness and acuteness, was highly commended. But his idea that the etymological history of words is a true guide, both as to the *present* import of the words themselves and as to the

nature of those things which they are intended to signify, is a fanciful and fallacious assumption." Horne Tooke did not succeed, for the facts are beyond the reach of etymological research. Has anybody succeeded? I have myself examined at least forty grammars, beginning with Cobbett's "Grammar for Plowboys" (which was cotemporaneous with Tooke) and including more than one Grammar of Grammars; — all sorts of grammars of high and low degree, leading up to the present year, besides such essays upon language as have fallen in my way. I think I am safe in saying that if any one has been able to penetrate the secret of the preposition, its nature, the information has never found its way into a grammar. And that is where one would naturally look for it. Only last winter I picked up a grammar then in use in the public school, and found the preposition defined as a class of words "without definite signification" — a statement which was seen to be ridiculous over a century ago. Imagine a class of words without definite meaning! One would be surprised at such persistency were it not for Sydney Smith's reminder that "a hundred years, to be sure, is a very little time for the duration of a

national error: and it is so far from being reasonable to look for its decay at so short a date, that it can hardly be expected, within such limits, to have displayed the full bloom of its imbecility."

But here we are starting to run afield, and I see that I owe the reader an apology. I had no idea that my little excursion to the Year One and back would prove so long a trip. It will be recalled that I was sitting in my room, having taken the prepositions into my mind and pushed the books aside in order to think for myself. I was not satisfied. The information that a preposition shows "some" relation between a noun and some other word, only made me want to know *what* relation. I sat in a deep quandary. "Every man to his trade," they say; and I, quite naturally, looked at the matter as if it were a mechanical problem and language a machine.

Suddenly I had the idea. I seized two grammars and used them to make motions with. Ten, fifteen, twenty motions — on, off, under, to, from, toward, beside, in (opening one grammar and putting the other in). I now watched the list of fifty-odd prepositions in one of the books, and whichever way I could move the book or place

it with regard to the other, the word for it was there on the list. I started at the beginning and made a complete test — above, after, against, across, around, at, before, behind, below, beside, beyond, down, for, from, into, on, off, round, past, over, through, etc., etc. It worked out. Now *that* is a preposition; and it only remains to state the fact as follows: A preposition is a word for position or direction.

Position and direction are relative rest and relative motion — relative because you cannot conceive the place of anything except with regard to some other thing. This is a natural law. While it is so simple, it is the same fact which has had to be struggled with, in what throes of futile language, by the metaphysicians, — those philosophers of Space and Time. Take up, for instance, Herbert Spencer's "First Principles." Here we see it stated, this first principle of the universe, or of the human mind. "Motion, as taking place apart from those limitations of space with which we habitually associate it, is totally unthinkable. For motion is change of place; but in unlimited space, change of place is inconceivable because place itself is inconceivable." Now this first prin-

ciple of the universe is the one which is being observed by the preposition, in language.

Possibly Spencer seems a little vague and abstract. The best way, then, is not to take your mind off into "unlimited space," as he suggests, but keep it right here on earth — it will do as well, and better. Try then to conceive the position or direction of something without regard to something else, and note that it is impossible. Spencer's way of saying it is, in effect, that you cannot move or operate Nothing. The way to get a working truth out of this abstraction is to take up something and observe that you cannot conceive its position or direction with regard to Nothing; it has got to be in regard to other *things*. This may seem simple (as all basic truth is), but nevertheless it has baffled the greatest minds to deal with it. There are different ways of possessing knowledge; and the greatest philosopher is he who can get a tangible hold of ideas and do something with them. It is one thing to have a vague large conception, and quite another to know how to put it to work. A preposition shows the relation between two objects. The verb names the act; the preposition names the posi-

tion or direction. And position and direction are relative.

The eye itself is constructed on this principle, else we should not be able to perceive motion. The retina presents a surface made up of innumerable ends of nerves, and the rays of light which come from each point on a moving object, all differing in color or intensity, travel across it making a record first on one nerve-end and then on another. The ray records its place on the retina, moves along and records its place again; and so we are conscious of position and direction, of motion fast or slow. Direction, observe, is nothing but position — a series of positions successively recorded, and shape itself is but the (relative) positions of various parts. Thus in the eyeball, that little inner globe, we find the first principles of the universe at work. It is another world. The preposition performs this function in language; it brings the things in their relations before the mind's eye. And so our definition — A preposition is a word which shows position or direction. It shows this relation between two objects (nouns) in connection with an act (a verb). The preposition names the position or direction;

the verb tells by what act it came to be in that position or direction. Each of them does that when used in its actual sense. When it does not seem to do that, it is being used in a poetical sense. But still it represents the same thing — and thus it gets its meaning.

Language is a mechanism which reproduces nature; that is what it is for. If the grammarian's terms do not fit this fact, he had better change them, for Nature will not change her facts to fit terms. A thinker would look into language *expecting* to find such a class of words, because they have got to be there. And it is beautiful to see the smallest words in our language, so complete and accurate and definite, fulfilling laws the most profound.

There is nothing more amusing, if you happen to be in the mood, than to read Tooke's shrewd flings at his fellow "scholards" in their difficulties with the Preposition. "And ignorance of their true origin has betrayed Grammarians and Philosophers into the mysterious and contradictory language which they have held concerning them. And it is really entertaining to observe the various shifts used by those who were too sharp-witted

and too ingenuous to repeat the unsatisfactory accounts of these prepositions handed down by others, and yet not ingenuous enough to acknowledge their own total ignorance on the subject. The Grammarian says it is none of his business, but that it belongs to the Philosopher; and for that reason only he omits giving an account of them; whilst the Philosopher avails himself of his dignity, and when he meets with stubborn difficulty which he cannot unravel (*and only then*) disdains to be employed about *Words;* although they are the necessary channels through which his most precious liquors must flow."

It is altogether surprising that Horne Tooke, acute as was his own understanding, did not succeed in discovering the nature of the Preposition. But, alas, he had an English education; and that was totally calculated to disable the mind permanently as regards the contemplation of mere facts. He was an Oxonian.

As for myself, thinking it over afterwards, I am unable to account for my folly in taking two books to make the motions with. My two fists would have served as well and been so much nearer at hand. But it always seems more learned

to use objects, or instruments, in making a scientific demonstration. I recall with what mental labors, when I was an urchin in Indiana, I learned a pageful of prepositions by heart. Those were the days of chills-and-fever, and it did seem that a boy no more than learned a lot of words than Nature came along (every other day) and shook them all out of his head. And I do not know but that she had a good system.

The grammatical chapter on Prepositions, intended for the mind of the child, refers to such abstract things as the Object, which is always in the objective case, and consists of a noun or its "equivalent." It tells how the Preposition shows some relation between the object, which may be a gerund or an adjective or adverb or a phrase or a clause used as a noun, and some other word which may be "a verb, an adjective, an adverb, or a noun or pronoun." To my boyhood recollection it seems so far, far removed from things of this earth. The book, unable to tell what a preposition is, simply gives the list of them to be studied over. I have often wondered why some genius, addressing some boy cheerfully with, "Now Johnny," does not tell him to put his left

fist on the desk and work his right fist around it. It would be so much easier to learn the prepositions in this way; in all cases it is folly, anyway, to do that with your head which can better be done by hand. How long would it take Johnny to see what a preposition is, and to perceive that, sure enough, it has got to have an object — his left fist? It must be that we have some different view of "Manual Training."

The number of prepositions varies in different grammars. The longest list does not exceed eighty words; and of all this number there are but three or four which would give any one the least trouble to demonstrate as being words of position or direction. These are *notwithstanding*, *but* (*except* or *save*), *during*, and *like*. *Notwithstanding* (and we are now trying to deal with them as prepositions) presents the idea of a thing which has been displaced by another thing; and it is so used in argument. The preposition *for* represents the same idea, but with the sense of mere substitution or exchange, while *notwithstanding* represents that which is displaced because it could not resist, could not withstand, the oncoming of the other. *During* shows relation between time and an act;

and it depicts juxtaposition, side-by-sideness, quite as much as if the two things were objects. *But* depicts a taking from, the setting aside of one thing from others: it is the same as *except* or *save*. *Like*, conceived very vividly, immediately becomes two objects lying next to each other — with or beside each other.

It will be observed, however, that in dealing with these four words in accordance with our definition of prepositions, the operation is becoming a little vague — somewhat as if we were straining the point to make out a case. For this there is a reason. It is because they partake of the nature of conjunctions. In all grammars the word *notwithstanding* is considered to be a preposition, a coördinate conjunction, and a subordinate conjunction. *But* is considered a preposition and a coördinate conjunction. The word *like* is very similar to *as* — and *as* is a conjunction. They both stand for comparison. Now right here is a most subtle shift in the machinery of language; and it is interesting to observe just how it takes place — this fine transition from prepositions to conjunctions.

Let us take a few prepositions and watch them

closely — *touching*, *towards*, *to*, *from*, *with*. *Touching* may be called a preposition of position: if it more than touched, it would be *in;* if it did less than touch, it would be *without*. *Toward* means approach, but not necessarily arrival. You could represent it by holding one hand at a distance and tending it somewhat in the direction of the other: but in order to represent *to* it would have not only to approach, but to arrive at the other. *From* is the opposite of *to* — a going away. *With* depicts two things together or side-by-side, whether they are in motion or at rest. It now becomes evident that *to* and *from* verge very closely upon the idea of *addition* and *subtraction;* and *with*, *by*, and *beside* are extremely near to the suggestion of comparison — of things put next to each other with the view of showing likeness or unlikeness. As yet, however, they do not. The ideas so far are purely those of position and direction. But just at this point conjunctions begin. At the point where *with* and *by* cease, and the idea steps over by means of *like* into *likewise;* and at the point where mere place and motion become something else and we start to add and subtract, conjunctions begin. Prepositions are concerned with

two things separately in space; conjunctions are concerned with a whole — the wholeness of *truth*. Therefore conjunctions deal with things with the object of adding or subtracting and discriminating; of making a statement and then *building it up or cutting it down to the truth*.

Language has, in general, a separate set of words for this to-and-from operation of Logic. But prepositions and conjunctions, and even adverbs and participles, verge so closely upon each other in the operations performed, that a considerable number of words serve for the one or the other function. These separate classes of words thus overlap at the edges — like the solar spectrum of seven "colors," which are in truth but three colors mingling at the edges and running into black. We must know the three primaries else we should not be able to mix colors at all; our work would be all confusion. By knowing the pure prepositions and the pure conjunctions, we immediately cease to be confounded by those words which have been the bane of grammatical text-books and the vexation of grammar students. All the more reason then that we should stick to our definition of a preposition — which is to say

Nature. If among the seventy or eighty prepositions in the list, there are three or four which seem to be *more* than a preposition, and a little off shade, it is quite natural — a thing to be expected in that mixing of colors on the palette of Language.

What a light I saw that evening when I discovered that grammar was simply Me! My little cubic allowance of rented space made room for starry systems as I flung them forth and let them operate according to *my* laws of prepositional proceedings. Him who knows the laws of things they dare not disobey. The world was made out of a thought. Therefore he who conceives it is the creator of that which is. A *to* or an *at* is as big as anything else; their constellations are in the mind — its universe of words. What though they are from a realm which is as astronomy in a looking-glass! The man who knows how to bring things home to himself can catch a comet and put salt on its tail.

Now that I was thoroughly interested I worked over my books of evenings as one who hopes for exceeding great reward. Tense, mood, gender and case — I did not mistrust them any more

than if they had been Predestination, or Grace, or the Trinity. I could not make much out of them, to be sure, but I had faith to believe that if I endured to the end they would give up their mystery and make the whole truth known. But, alas, there came a sudden end to my study of grammar. At first I could hardly believe it. And then when I did believe it I could hardly realize it. Having worried my brains doggedly over the terminology of gender and case and tense and mood I found out that there are no such things. Is not the whole philological introduction to the Dictionary taken up with explaining, step by step, how these things passed out of English?

I do not think that I was a born infidel toward grammar. On the contrary, I believed it. And then, by too much curious examination of the subject, I lit upon mysteries which turned over my whole inner state, demolished the fair structure of learning and set me forward again from my own Year One. And when it comes my turn to be asked, "What book has most influenced you?" I will not have to think long to find the answer. The book which has most influenced me is Webster's Dictionary. And I wish to say that if

we expect to protect our young men and women and bring them up with faith unshaken in grammar, we should be careful where we put the philological facts. To bury them in the mere introduction of a book of such length may seem safe; but yet it is a volume which goes into every home; it is liable at any time to fall into the hands of the young. As for me, it was a painful experience. When I again went down into my grammatical dungeon and viewed those grammarians standing shoulder to shoulder, I could hardly believe that there could be such solidarity of untruth, such carefully organized nomenclature! But there, on the other hand, were the facts. And what true American can disbelieve in Noah? Moreover, I discovered, in fine print at the bottom of a grammar itself, a hint to teachers that these things were not "true inflection." They are only make-believe things: there is no really-truly gender and voice and mood in English: it is a learned fiction. When I saw those two words of truth admitted by one of their own number, it was the end of grammar for me. "Why," said I, "do they not tell me these things and not go whispering it among themselves?" I immediately

saw why I had not been able to get profit out of their words. I was very much incensed.

The facts are simple. The English language had a hard time working its way up in the world. When scholars would not write in it, and the court would not speak it and even the Norman conquerors did not respect it, the language was being perfected by the Saxon "churl" and the Norse sailor and farmer. They liked a speech which was good and practical; they improved it by every-day sailing and farming and love-making. As they persisted in talking that way, a teacher in a Latin-Grammar School (for English was not considered worthy of study in England) decided he had better give it a grammar. And he did —a Latin grammar. A grammar should arise out of a language by an examination of the tongue itself, but English had its grammar thrust upon it. This grammar, padded out with nomenclature where it did not fit, was in use for so many generations that the method of teaching English became traditional. The grammar of English was, necessarily, the work of a scholar; but for centuries all scholars did their grammatical thinking in Greek and Latin. They could

not see English except through that medium. John Selden, when he wrote his treatise on the ownership of the seas surrounding Britain, wrote it in Latin. James the First wrote his idiotic work on Dæmonology in Latin. Bacon wrote his great philosophy of science in Latin. It is but yesterday that the man who wished his work to survive would not trust it to such a language as English: it was not the language of scholarship. English was one of the "vulgar tongues." This was in Shakespeare's time and long after. For centuries England did not teach English in the schools. That language was a dialect which the children brought to school with them; and they came there to study Latin. Greek and Latin were *necessary*, however, in those times. The dark ages had not, in a thousand years, produced anything worth reading; and so the only door to a great literature was Greek or Latin.

There was another reason why English grammar was a purely fictional — not a natural — science. English is an exceptional language; it is different in grammar from all others, and the analysis of it would have to proceed in the purely scientific spirit. The scientific spirit had not been

born; it is comparatively recent. Bacon made a remark worth remembering, always. He said, "Were there a single man to be found with a firmness sufficient to efface from his mind the theories and opinions vulgarly received, and to apply his intellect free and without prevention, the best hopes might be entertained of his success." A few men in a generation look into things on their merits — a very few. Few men can efface from their minds the opinions vulgarly received in school. The headquarters for English grammar was naturally England.

If we wish to realize why this study was so fearfully and wonderfully made, and how it continued to be inflated with mere verbiage, we have but to consider what English ideals of education were even in the nineteenth century. Sydney Smith (and he was a graduate of Oxford) says: "We think that, in order to secure attention to Homer and Virgil, we must catch up every man, — whether he is to be a clergyman or a duke, — begin with him at six years of age, and never quit him till he is twenty; making him conjugate and decline for life and death; and so teaching him to estimate his progress in real wisdom as he

can scan the verses of the Greek tragedians. The English clergy, in whose hands education entirely rests, bring up the first young men of the country as if they were all to keep grammar schools in little country towns; and a nobleman, upon whose knowledge and liberality the honor and welfare of his country may depend, is diligently worried, for half his life, with the small pedantry of longs and shorts. There is a timid and absurd apprehension, on the part of ecclesiastical tutors, of letting out the minds of youth upon difficult and important subjects. They fancy that mental exertion must end in religious skepticism: and, to preserve the principles of their pupils, they confine them to the safe and elegant imbecility of classical learning. A genuine Oxford tutor would shudder to hear his young men disputing upon moral and political truth, forming and pulling down theories, and indulging in all the boldness of youthful discussion. He would augur nothing from it but impiety to God and treason to kings. And yet, who vilifies both more than the holy poltroon who carefully averts from them the searching eye of reason, and who knows no better method of teaching the highest duties than by

extirpating the finest qualities and habits of the mind! Every Englishman must pass half his life in learning Latin and Greek; and classical learning is supposed to have produced the talents which it has not been able to extinguish."

This was written in 1808. The grammatical text-books — of which there have been so many — had to be written by these young men, and by their classical brethren in America. Is it any wonder that grammar was a sort of theology, a thing of mere terms and tradition? When a mere word has led a long and learned career, it begins to look very much like a fact. Grammar consisted of certain words — terms; and the teaching of them constituted a profession. And what man would presume to know more about grammar than a grammarian? If it were discovered that he did not know a participle from a gerund, he would be made ridiculous. Grammar hardly offered a field of glory to tempt the average man. A wise man is well aware that the person who tries to introduce labor-saving machinery into the realm of theology or metaphysics is bound to have a stormy time of it. The employees realize that if their words are taken away from them,

which they have spent years in learning to operate, their means of support will be gone. It is not policy to tamper with such things. A patent hay-rake or a new stump-puller pays better.

But in a republic, where an education has got to consist of facts and ideas, such a state of affairs could not last. Within a generation theology has passed out; and the final step in heresy was a disbelief in grammar. That book had pretended to know all about English for centuries; its living was sacrosanct; and yet a few years ago it fell under the suspicion of not knowing what it meant. Upon a fair and impartial examination it was found that it could not produce the facts. It could not pass the examination. As children had always been greatly puzzled by it, and as they did not seem to profit by their pains, the old formal study was abolished in the best schools. In its place came the practical, untechnical Language Lessons. Grammar was expelled from school. It deserved to be.

The ex-schoolboy, visiting his old district in recent years, must have felt the dawn of the millennium when he discovered there was no longer such a book. There was not one of us, even the

dullest, who did not suspect there was something wrong with it. The one I studied was produced in the days when they truly believed that language was presented to Adam, ready-made, in the Garden of Eden, to clothe his mind withal; and thinking so the grammarian would hardly look upon it from a merely human standpoint. It is scarcely a generation since Max Müller himself was arguing that a man could not reason without language — as if man had not learned to doubt before he said "If." And what is doubt but reason? As for the ones I "took," I can bear witness that their leaves were not plucked from the tree of knowledge. "Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lillys and the Linacres; . . . They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *flori* and their *spici-legia*." Go to, Charles Lamb! When this same Lilly went forth into the language-garden he saw nothing but dried specimens; and his famous grammar was like the botany of his time — "so much Latin hay." He, and he alone, was the author of our confusion; and what right has *he* to rest who left naught but endless tasks be-

hind him? Methinks you were reminded of flowers by his name.

Grammar is a repellent and uninteresting tale. Years ago I promised myself that, when I became a man, I would not forget to say it. It seemed to me that in education there was a great deal of who's who and what's what, but a woful lack of why's why; and as I had to find my own reasons or do without, I saw that the learned ought to be exposed. And so I promised myself that, when I had the necessary appurtenances, — whiskers, long legs, and all those things that come by simply waiting, — I would not forget the grievances of my ancestor the boy. But at eighteen or twenty-one we are all traitors. Having climbed up on our own shoulders, as it were, we stealthily kick ourselves away: we are so pleased to be fully born that we leap straightway into the world, and henceforth there must not be a suspicion of that innocence by which we must learn all we can ever know. At forty or fifty, when we begin to see the point, we turn back for a moment and try to recover that native wisdom and free-born intellectual effrontery; but now we have become so tamed and chastened that we would

not hurt a flea. We realize that things are somehow propped up on big words, and we are afraid to knock any of them away. The only two who really meet and understand each other are the new babe and his grandpa, both of them bald. There is something they both seem to know; and all between is the wilderness of words. Being thus led back to my former self, I would like to say something bold and bitter. Is there any one among us who would like to go back and study grammar again? No. At least I guess not — and I hope that is properly said. The whole truth is that it took years of experiment on thousands, yes millions, of children, to demonstrate that the story of grammar is not true; and any boy could have pointed that out long ago. But his words would have been taken for mere simplicity, the world not knowing, what it has been trying for ages to learn, that unless ye become as one of these ye cannot enter into the kingdom of knowledge. But that has all passed. At last it was frowned upon by the emancipated educator; it was put out.

But now it is coming back again. For some reason, or rather for certain reasons, the language

lessons, and the written exercises to be corrected by the teacher, did not accomplish all that was expected of them. A piece of writing may be immaculately "proper," and yet be utterly worthless in its structure — a mere exercise in talkativeness. And as for the efficacy of good models of expression, it all depends upon whether the student's mind has been trained to observe closely, analytically. It was some such experience, I believe, which led the teachers of language lessons to feel that something additional was needed. Pupils should form habits of analysis, for herein lies the power of self-advancement. And what would inculcate this close, detailed observation? The answer was, inevitably, the technical study usually called English Grammar. Thus the old text-book is coming back.

But what assurance have we that the old book will behave itself any better than it did before? How do we know but that it will continue to be one of those books which *lasst sich nicht lesen* — will not permit itself to be read? Any sort of original effort, mental willingness, can result only from a real interest in the subject; and it is the function of a teacher or a text-book to foresee the

means by which the natural mind will be led into a subject, and make such encouraging progress that the study of it will be spontaneous. It is the business of education, in short, not merely to hand out formal facts in the shape of somebody's conclusions, but to give the impetus of interest. We all know how interesting a grammar is. Will it do any differently with the same old terminology system — voice and mood and tense, and gender and number and case? Why should it? How can it? And how can the result be any different from what it was before?

As to those things we have just mentioned — gender and case and voice and mood — they need not be made the subject of further controversy. The critics pointed out that there are no such things in English to an extent worth mentioning, and that the study of them belongs to an inflected language like Latin; therefore, as English Grammar is a mere pretence of their existence, and little else, it should be done away with. This is, of course, a philological fact; but a rather poor conclusion. Grammar is simply the analysis of a language. It would be strange, indeed, if English were not capable of analysis. Language is a

machine; grammar is an examination of its joints and bearings; and it would be stranger still if that examination could not be made interesting and profitable. The fact that the grammar of generations was simply unlearnable was hardly a reason for despair. Because *they* did not solve a problem is no reason for abandoning all idea of the technical study of English. Here was the mistake of the critics: they thought that as the text-book was the source of so much bootless trouble, it should simply be abolished; then everything would be right. Down with grammar! English has n't any grammar. But the notion that there is no such thing as English Grammar, simply because *those* books did not make head and tail of it, shows a limited comprehension of the nature of speech.

The question should rather be: Why is grammar not interesting? As to those non-existent things with which the greater part of a grammar is concerned, there are, in truth, some slight traces of them left in English — just barely enough to hang the terms on. And as they represent certain facts of life or of the human mind, however English may meet the requirements, — whether by

inflection or otherwise, — there can be no objection to retaining them in the study *provided* the terms are always kept subservient to facts. We must remember that grammar came down to us from an age when there was great faith in words. Bacon, who conceived the idea of facts, had not yet had much effect upon the English clerical mind. Then, besides, English is the simplest and most logical language in the world; and that was a source of great difficulty. Simple things are exceedingly difficult to find out. When a man's idea is to be learned, he never can see anything simple. For a host of reasons grammar became a maze of terminology and circumlocution; and the less a man knew upon the subject the more learned his book seemed. But as to the terms that have been retained by the more modern grammarians, it is not in *them* that the trouble lies. That English, unlike other languages, is without gender is well enough known — it is a matter of common scandal; but as there *is* such a thing in the science of language, it would be a profitless critic who would run a-tilt at mere terms and try to abolish all reference to such things.

It is not words which puzzle children; it is

words without *facts* behind them. There is no reason why grammar should not retain all these things, providing the author knows how to put facts behind them, and make them interesting enough to be remembered. When a grammarian starts with mere terminology and nomenclature uppermost in his mind, and considers that here is the thing to be conveyed, however empirically, he is utterly useless; he has no business in modern education.

For some reason grammar has failed to be of interest or profit. Despite the fact that language is really a natural science (and most absorbingly interesting), and despite the respect which this age has for facts, however simple, grammar has remained a bugbear. Here is a problem to be solved. And as an interest in education is the best part of our patriotism, it is well worth solving. Let us give it all a reconsideration from the ground up, gathering in each fact for the sake of finding, if possible, what the answer is. In intellectual circles — which get around occasionally to their starting point — there is a time for all things if you watch close; and the time to settle this grammar question is now. While I may not

be able to do more than entertain the reader with my notions, I must admit that my object is more ambitious. I would rather succeed in clearing up a matter which concerns millions of children than be the author of the greatest poem this country has ever produced. And if there be an old-time grammarian left in America, — I hope there is not, — let him be assured that I do not aim at the wreck and ruin of the learned. I come not to bury Cæsar but to parse him.

A grammar should be true to the language of a people. To know English, we have simply to get back to the spirit of its practical-minded makers. Let us see what that was. The making of language out of mere *words* was one of the greatest difficulties humanity ever had to face. The first step in language consisted in coming to a mutual understanding as to a meaning for a number of sounds or words; and as man is somewhat of an actor and a very good pointer, this was at first no great problem. But this was hardly a beginning. Language had to be invented; for words will not make a statement even if you say them all. We may make a statement in three words, and then with the same three words

say the exact opposite: as, "John hit James" — "James hit John." Or think, with De Quincey, of the difference between a horse-chestnut and a chestnut horse. Or again: "I saw a man going down town" — "Going down town I saw a man." Thus it is evident that, when we understand language, we are not merely understanding words. We understand also a system; and this system shows, expresses, the relation between words. Everybody has to understand it, else words would be of little use. This brings us to a leading fact. As the object in all speech is nothing more or less than to express the relations between things, it follows, as a logical conclusion, that that which shows the relations is most truly the language. And so this system is worthy of our thought because it is most truly English.

Now there are two ways of making words talk — two methods that have been used by the language-builders of Europe. There is the particle-and-place system and the inflection system. A fully inflected language would be one in which you could throw a word into a sentence at whatever point you pleased; or, to express it differently, a language whose *words* are so devised that

there will be no confusion in the meaning, no matter how you choose to arrange them. Place them one way or another, they continue to say the same thing. Greek came very near to being that kind of language. Now how was it done?

Let us, for the sake of explanation, imagine an English sentence, a telegraphic message, the words of which, instead of being written in a row, are sprinkled about on the paper, here and there. It would be found, in many cases, that there would be no way of telling exactly what the words said. If for instance we saw, here and there, the words, *killed* — *John* — *James* — it would be quite a problem: one, indeed, which the greatest grammarian or cryptographer would be unable to solve. As to the rest of the sentence, we would know, by way of a clue, that certain kinds of words belong together, as — *large house* — *beautiful garden;* which is to say, adjectives belong to nouns. But if, in this part of the sentence, there were two or more names of things, and a number of adjectives which would make sense with one or the other of them, we would be brought to a halt; there would be no way of telling which

word belonged to which. In English the words have to march in a row before they can carry their meaning.

But in a language built on the principle of Greek, there would be no such difficulty. The words would be labeled with little endings, or inflections, to show the relations between them. One noun would have an ending to show that it was the name of the person or thing which performed the act; another noun would have an ending to show that it was the name of the person or thing acted upon; and right there you would have the principal statement of a sentence —*James killed John.* And then as to the words which describe things. Each adjective would have an ending which corresponded with the ending of the noun it belonged to. And so, in a language using this method, adjectives are said to "agree," — meaning that the endings must agree or correspond. And this brings us to the language we are interested in.

All European languages had this complicated grammar or method of syntax from the earliest historical times; and the Northern races had it most fully in the days when the Greeks and Ro-

mans considered them barbarians. In everything but vocabulary, or the harsher sound of their words, they had all the fundamental characteristics of the classical tongues, though not to the *extent* of the Greek, in which the principle was carried to the highest pitch of refined complexity. Greek, despite its softer words, was the language of "barbarism" twice confounded. Even English, or Anglo-Saxon, formerly had all these things — gender, a dual number, agreement of words by inflection; and much of it remained in the language up to the time of Chaucer.

One might have supposed, a few hundred years ago, that man could not communicate his thoughts in any other way than by grammatical "agreement" of words. But there is another way, and English is the purest example of it. Although inflection was natural to our own rude ancestors, and was carried to such perfection in the great literatures of Greece and Rome, and is retained to a considerable extent in all other modern languages, English gets along with hardly a trace of it. And how? Simply by putting words in a certain order. It is as if we had got up a certain mould, or set of moulds, into which any statement whatever would fit.

This logically developed mould has the magic power of meeting the demands of any possible statement without confusion. And does it seem possible that mere subject, predicate, object, with a few set forms for added phrases, would contain and measure out with mechanical accuracy all the conceptions and insights and inspirations of the human mind? It hardly seems possible. And if the reader catches here some notion of its strangeness, let him hold it in mind long enough to see the problem, unsolved, as it must have appeared to primitive man.

As words are written in a row, so must they be spoken; and though we put much into them, the reason and thought have got to be put *between* them. Now there was a puzzle for your Aryan ancestor! Whatever theories there may be of the origin of inflection, I think that that old system of explanatory, detachable endings suggested itself as the most *obvious*, in fact the only way; for who would have been simple enough to suppose that a few inflexible phrases would do it all? It must have seemed to him necessary to have a word include within itself both meaning *and* relation — and then the freedom with which such

words could be shifted about must have appeared the only way of expression adapted to the free and various workings of the world.

In the beginning, we must reflect, they did not have nine classes of words all scientifically sorted out and numbered; and the various limbs of a sentence critically examined. Language grew; it developed under the pressure of necessity. It was only after speech had taken some final form that it could be inspected and found so mechanically simple. And so we have English, a tongue wherein a word is a word, not changing in form, but, like a numeral, finding its power in the place it holds; or rather, like a soldier marching across the page in a platoon, and not proceeding on its own authority. This genius for putting words into set formations — a restriction which has resulted in unexpected power — was peculiar to the practical-minded Teuton — the German, the Scandinavian, the English. But English, because of certain vigorous historical influences, forged suddenly ahead, and went further before it became fixed in a national literature. And which way of speech is the best — the old or the new?

Looking at Europe in the times that preceded

our Year One, we see in the south two peoples which had reached a high state of cultivation; first Greece, and then Rome. Far to the north, and hardly within their knowledge, were the barbarians, our own Teutonic ancestors. These were the rude tribes who were later to surge southward and wipe out the Roman legions with club and spear. Their words, vigorous and energetic, still live on the tongues of their descendants, the languages of northern Europe. The Romance languages — Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese — inherit the words of the Roman speech, a dead language. And Greek has been forgotten by the Greeks. This great transformation, when examined, reveals certain workings of the law of languages which are of considerable interest in these present times.

As we have observed, both of these ancient languages and the speech of the barbarians were inflected; but the Greek, which itself began in barbarism, outran them on this score beyond comparison. The Greek scholar, having need of a subtle instrument of expression, carried the principle of inflection to its utmost possibilities; and by the time the language had developed to

meet the needs of the rhetoricians, it was so complicated that only a scholar could know it all. There were twelve hundred inflections of participles alone. The easy transposition of words in a sentence gave it certain literary virtues, according to southern tastes in that regard; it accommodated itself easily to Greek ideals in poetry and oratory. But the "soft Ionic tongue," by the time inflection had accomplished all that was needed, was truly a learned language.

The Teutonic races, instead of cultivating inflection as they advanced, tended away from it — not consciously, but as the outcome of their nature, practical and direct. Inflection, it would seem, arose from certain difficulties with language in the making: the Greek proceeded in language-building with purely æsthetic instincts, liking sound as much as sense; but the Teutonic mind, with a different notion of poetry and with more of an eye for mere practical results in the statement of facts, kept solving it all in the direction of simplicity. They had no notion of that anomalous being called a scholar, — of that sort of knowledge which Socrates opposed as false learning among his race, and for the notice of

which he got a drink of hemlock; and when the Teuton did become a scholar, it was in a knowledge of facts. And so his language works somewhat the same, like a chemical formula or a machine. It grinds out statements on a universal plan. And what became of the mother-tongueless children of Rome? It seems that the Latin peoples, from mingling with those wild conquerors who overran the southern country, picked up their manner of speech. But not their words. They adopted the sentence-form, the structure, the way of working the words. Thus the Romance languages are of Latin origin; but they are not Latin. They did it simply because the common people found it more suited to their needs — their ignorance if you please. Greek died of grammar. And so did Latin — among her own children. For it must be remembered that while the Goths upset the Roman empire they did not destroy the people. Nor have the Turks destroyed the Greeks. Greek and Latin declined until they fell.

The passing out of inflection, a gradual process, did not, however, continue to the end. German is considerably inflected, as is French, and the

rest of them, for they carry a whole world-system of gender or arbitrary sex, inherited from the Goths on the one hand or the Romans on the other. This is unnecessary to languages of their structure; it is not strictly consistent; and while it may lend a tongue a character dear to the hearts of its people, this sex of nouns and inflection of adjectives presents an extra difficulty to the foreigner who would learn it. English has done away with such things entirely. We have taken full advantage of the Gothic system. Gender, in the Greek, was a desirable element, for it was in the nature of the language to require many distinctions between nouns: it was part of the logical system of "agreement." In fact, there have been but two sorts of languages consistent and harmonious within themselves: they are the classical tongues and English — the two opposites. Greek was utterly one thing, English is utterly the other. Our language, then, has gone to the logical conclusion, with a method of speech which all the peoples of Europe have stamped with their approval; for they found the simpler way necessary as the basis of their own languages. It was the work of the common people, the speakers

of the long-despised "vulgar tongues"; and their choice was one that was pointing the way to democracy.

English is the highest product of democracy. And it is its most efficient instrument, for the structure is of the simplest. In English alone a word is a word. It does not change for grammatical significations; it has no dead lumber from the past. It is the easiest of languages for a foreigner to learn. It would almost seem as if it were predestined for the particular uses of a great colonizing empire and such a republic as ours. But the fact is that this seeming providence and the language itself are all of a piece; it is merely the nature of the people manifesting itself under different guises. Language and history are but the outcome of national character.

The very traits which threw inflection overboard — and the most fearless and lawless helpers were the Scandinavian pirates — are the traits which forged ahead in America. The Republic is so vast that it is, in the last analysis, a government of print. With Greek the United States could not welcome the world and remain united long. It is a wonderful thought that we have the

one uninflected tongue. It is a triumph of the Gothic system of talk. And that was not built for poetry; it was constructed with a single eye to putting phrases together for the purpose of saying something. It was a matter of arranging words according to laws, so that they would fall in line and operate without confusion — and this is the indomitable line which conquered Latin and then drove French from court and put it among the dead diplomatic tongues.

> O Britain ! O my country ! words like these
> Have made thy name a terror and a fear
> To all the nations —

What has the language lost by getting rid of inflection? Such a language is not flexible enough, theoretically, to meet the demands of poetry, or even of good prose. And so it would seem that the modern languages, and more particularly English, would have to sacrifice much. Germany has produced the great musicians; and the list of them is astonishing. The French excel in painting and the superficial arts. But England has produced the *Poetry*. In poetry, English stands supreme. "Here is fine revolution indeed, an' had we the gift to see it!" It is at once the language of de-

mocracy and of culture. And just as sure as the alphabet survived Greek, and the Arabic notation displaced the Roman and outlived it, and for the same simple reasons, English is destined to spread. One can only wonder where it will stop. We have "gone West" so far that we already have a foot on the threshold of the East.

But enough. Much as I would like to hold forth upon relative pronouns, and adverbs, and especially participles, — and they make most interesting revelations of life and nature, — there must be an end to all things. The essayist, like the metaphysician, must have regard for time and space. For the layman to go into the science of teaching such a subject as grammar would be a rash procedure — but possibly the educator will be able to make something out of my tale.

VI

"WE"

"WE"

AMELIA was going to read it to me; and as it was so important and mysterious, she gave it a preparatory perusal.

"Well! Do they feed the bulls on *cake* in England?" she inquired.

"Read me the context," I said.

She read: "'You've sixty-seven, and you don't cake. You've broken the lease in that respect. You're dragging the heart out of the farm.'"

"In England," I said, opening my eyes, "they feed the bulls largely on oilcake made of cotton-seed in the United States, — after we have used it to make the patent lard and the soap that floats."

"Humph!"

She continued to scan the literary score; and while she was preparing herself I put my feet up, and resumed my train of thought, to wit: —

A figure of speech unites the strong and obvious with the coy and hidden, and everybody is joyed in the marriage and the child, especially if the union be properly done in the monogamic way. To meet approval it must bear the author's stamp of consent; it must be a plain, open, two-sided comparison. But as for a triple allusion, *that* is something that may not be formally encompassed. The third dimension must be subtly apprehended by the reader, and the solid substance of it must be mentioned discreetly, — else everybody will rise *en masse* to protest. (As if the full measure of meaning robbed the primal matter of its beauty.) But it arouses suspicion, and it is more culpable to steal a meaning into something than to filch an idea out of it. So we are down on it. Our honest, straightforward minds will not brook such triplicity.

I was going on in that vein till I should have put myself asleep, had not Amelia started up.

"Do you know what the Egg Itself is? There is n't any context, except dashes and things."

"Nothing? no clue at all?" I inquired.

"No. The Blind Woman draws the figure of the Egg Itself with her finger as she names the

lot of colors of — the picture. It must be important, because it is capitalized and named twice. And that's all. I suppose that is one of the parts that everybody is wondering about."

"Maybe it's an Easter egg," I offered.

"Silly!" she said, and kept on with her perusal.

And I kept on with my thinking.

There are three sorts of people: those whose life is simply the living of it; those who yearn for expression but have not the gift; and those who can write. The first may be said to feel; the second may be said to feel and hear, but not to see. Theirs is only the rumor and shadow of joy wantoning in the wood. But to say a thing is like catching it alive. Such trappers must have sharp sight. — Hearing does not exactly locate. A thing expressed belongs to you for the first time, and there is the joy of seeing it.

"I guess I might as well begin," she said. "I don't catch the meaning of half of it at all. Nobody does. But it is very beautiful."

"Is it a detective story, then?"

"They always come out in the end, and this does n't. The first part I like, though. Listen."

She read at first rhythmically, intimately, as in pure enjoyment; and then toward the middle I noticed that she had gone into the constrained, reverend tone. I opened my eyes. Her brows drew together, with an enigma between them, as when she sometimes sticks slightly on a matter of literary faith, but makes herself say it as it is printed. I had begun to smile just at the impressive part; and as for the hidden meanings, they kept me in a constant titillation. But I kept myself from laughing *viva voce*, despite their aptness in hitting the thing off. When she arrived at the place where the author's signature used to be on all writings, her arms dropped. And the magazine, which had all the time been trying to shut up, slapped itself together. Her eyes lifted, rather vacantly, and she sat a moment in a quandary. Then, looking my way, she saw what was left of a smile and heard a chuckle, — just as she was about to take me into the problem.

Myself had evidently become the conundrum now. She straightened up with her eyes set open as if she were making a photographic exposure on my dark interior, — looking in a purely optical way through the windows of my soul down

into the obscurity where the strange sound had come from.

"Why, what is there funny about that to laugh about?"

"Funny! Why, it's just good. I was just laughing at the way he hit off those two fellows. And the whole business. That's them."

"It is They," she corrected. "But I am sure most people would not laugh at it."

"That kind," I rejoined, "cannot laugh at anything that is not in their own earnest lives. I was just laughing at the rap he took at those fellows. He was kind to the editor, though."

"What fellows? Where?"

"There where he came to in his automobile. He comes cross-country on his machine and unknowingly runs into the Garden of Literature, all set about with trees trimmed to the form of jousting knights and peacocks, and smooth maids of honor, — inanimate things vivified, things of common day invested with imagery. Not mere trees, and therefore only realistic, nor yet purely artificial and therefore tawdry and romantic, but the real thing in a livelier guise. That is 'Literature.' Not only in a new form, but formal — classical.

Literature is really horticultural. The showing of the romantic in the real is what it *is*. Literature is a combination."

"Oh, you are pleased with your figure of speech, — the symbolism you saw."

"*My* figure of speech!" I exclaimed. Did she not catch the drift of it at all? "In that garden you have been reading about," I continued calmly, "is the House of Imagination, with the coy little sprites, children of the Imagination, running roundabout and in and out; and here in the House of Imagination, with its curved mirrors transforming even straight edges into lines of beauty, is the fantastic Fire of Imagination lighting and warming it."

"But he does n't say they are that," she protested.

"No? And the way he has laid it over those fellows, the editor and the publisher!"

"What! The Butler and the Tenant Farmer? Do you mean to say that — "

"Are n't they the only two men on the estate? Look at the story."

"Go on. I don't know anything about it," she said.

"This Madden, the Butler, is a member of the

Household proper — as an editor really is. But the Tenant Farmer, Turpin,— shades of the highway robber! — is only commercially interested. He is always scheming a way to drag the heart out of the land, and wanting more on his overstocked back acres. A greedy man, she calls him; and the author says he is a ginger-headed giant. She says he is quite a new man — not the kind that were before him. Indeed he is; quite a modern production. But Madden is given more of a character. He is solicitous for the honor of the house, — which he is, of course. He has more than the mercenary impulse. Let's see how it says it. 'Evidently a butler, solicitous for the honor of the house, and interested, probably through a maid, in the nursery.' Only evidently a butler. Inevidently, on the other hand, he is an editor, solicitous for literature and tending the nursery of literary young hopefuls through his maid, the stenographer. Ho, ho! He makes him more vivid every time he mentions him. The fellow accompanied the automobile to the crossroads, and having pointed the way, he immediately 'retired into the armor-plated conning-tower of his castle and walked away.'"

"I thought that was just a description of an English butler, but a rather queer one."

"So it is, too," I replied. "Any one who has sent him a little poem must recognize the armor-platedness of his personal position. And as to the editorial watch-tower, I hope I do not have to explain that — it being so much to the point. This author represents himself in the story as coming out of the East — "

"Of England. The trip was in England," said Amelia.

"True enough. But did you ever see any 'fig trees of the lower coast' in England? Such a thing in the very first paragraph ought to give any one a hint of the way in which it is all to be taken."

"Go on."

"I say this writer came out of the East, suddenly, in a literary vehicle that was a very automobile of modernity — a lively Pegasus of style. And he ran all unaware, so it seems, into the Garden of Literature, where lives the woman, — the beautiful Blind Woman who made the children come with her yearning, but cannot see them. She only feels and hears."

"Now," said Amelia promptly, with the air of making a thorough test of the matter, "how about those colors? He thinks something while he is trying to fix his automobile, and she tells him to stop because those colors hurt. Is there any sense in all that talk about the Blind Woman seeing 'black streaks and jags across the purple,' and 'purple and black,' and all that when he *thinks?*"

"That," said I, "is good — the philosophy of style. Style is the submonition one gets of a writer without being able to exactly locate the reason for it — much as this woman senses the 'colors' she cannot be said to see. You know it is said that a man cannot put pen to paper without telling on himself; the printed page will somehow take on the hue of his mind, even though he thinks himself artfully silent in some ways and declarative in others. This writer, or automobilist, was silent of what he said inwardly about the machine. A man can see and say only himself. As the woman says, 'They are not in the world at all. They are in *you*.' That is Style — the colors we show to the insight. I suppose you recognize that this is the best possible symbolism of Style."

While Amelia hesitated to admit what she saw, I had to smile — or grin — again.

"Now you are thinking of something funny," she ventured.

"How did you know? Well, yes — I was. I was thinking of his mentioning a hue 'like port wine mixed with ink.' I wonder whether some of the English writers get the local color of self entirely from those fluids? Possibly that is what makes the 'black streaks and jags across the purple.'"

Amelia looked at me dubiously, wondering whether there were not more of me, possibly, than she had become acquainted with. But she immediately placed her finger on another lot of the black streaks and read them: "'I was silent, reviewing that inexhaustible matter, the more than inherited (since it is also carefully taught) brutality of the Christian peoples, beside which the mere heathendom of the West Coast nigger is cleanly restraint. It led me a long distance into myself.'

"He doesn't give any clue to that, either. What is it?"

"That's Criticism — and more."

"And now," said Amelia, "what does that

queer part mean, — her tracing the figure of the Egg Itself, and naming all those colors when he asked her to describe the 'picture' as she saw it? And then he speaks of it again as 'the Egg which it is given to very few of us to see.' What is it? Can't you and I see it — if it is so important? Why?"

"I will try and convey it. The colors she mentioned are the spectroscopic colors into which sunlight decomposes — the colors of the rainbow. And all together, mixed or fused, they make the white light, or Truth — which literature attempts but never accomplishes. The Egg Itself is the Sun, from which the light and these colors emanate, and from which the world itself was hatched. I daresay you never saw the Sun, did you, — or Truth? Now do you begin to see a few things? Now you see why he describes Style, which is no more or less than the substance of literature, as being made of colors that are 'separate — all broken.' That is the way she saw his thoughts. None of us speak the white light of the whole truth, but only strange patterns of the decomposed light, vagaries of color. Some of us see more of one and some more of another."

Amelia had, I thought, begun to believe. But now she looked at me in doubt. I had probably become over-convincing. There is such a thing as being too right. It is not popular.

"But what of it?" she inquired.

"I don't know. They are just figures of speech."

"I thought you might be twitting me. Tell me, then, about those tallies."

"Ah — the old English tallies — that kept the Fire of Imagination going," I said musingly. I resolved to attack her by the intellect no longer; I would appeal to the woman in her. I stepped into the next room. I brought back our publishers' statement of the sales up to a certain day.

"There," I said, "take it in your hand. An English tally, as you certainly know, was a notched stick for the purpose of keeping accounts. You could cast up your reckoning by feeling, as this blind woman did the 'milk record.' We know our publishers are honest, do we not?"

"Oh, I know they are."

"You feel that they are honest," I said. "So it is that they keep accounts with us. We never

see them, we feel that they are correct. Such tallies, then, are the fagots that keep the Fire of Imagination going; they make it leap and play and cast its distorted vagaries abroad. But of course it never brought forth the Truth, or deepened the impassioned Insight."

Amelia arose and strolled up and down the room. Now and then I could feel a glimmer of admiration and approval.

"Now," I said, "I might as well prepare you for the deeper waters. You see plainly enough, as everybody does, that this childless woman has a longing for children. The children are those of imagination, of yearning, for she 'made them come.' But she cannot see them: she is both childless and blind. All that is plain. Now, outside of this ideal place is the busy world, pictured in all its worriment. Inside the garden is a place of fantastic, distorted imagery,— what we call beautiful. And in this woman is only what she feels and knows by intuition. So there is the world of mere Experience, the world of Imagination, and the world of Insight,— of living, dreaming, and really knowing. This woman is a childless one yearning for expression, progeny,

—just as one who cannot write yearns to bring forth children of his fancy and see them in expression, —just as all of us in the world, 'us blindies,' long to know the truth, but never do except we look within and abide by the longings of our nature, whole and unbroken. We cannot work it out in an arithmetic of words; it would be a shame if we had to. The three worlds are here depicted separately and apart from one another, but in mutual comment — a triple figure of speech, and triplicate. And along comes a writer. So it is principally an allegory shedding its trinity of hue and uniting in a white light on the literary life, which is the main thing illumined. The woman is principally one who yearns for expression. In the narrower feminine sense she is literary, and in the larger application, human. She cannot write; she has no children."

"But here is something I am curious about," said Amelia. "What I want to know is this. Why did those little sprites, that had been avoiding him all through the story, come to him toward the end?"

"Don't you understand? They came to him when he stopped tapping on the leather screen, in

which way he had been calculating the cost of Turpin's new shed. Finally he ceased his tapping and sat forgetful; and right at that point the little children that had been so coy came and made friends with him. The Inspirations came when he was not thoughtful of money. Love is the reward of unselfishness. And these little ones were the children of Love."

"What! These sprites! I thought—"

"Yes, she just imagined them. But there is more to it. You notice that the girl depicted outside of the garden had a child that died. And the child was what? There was not the usual bargain beforehand, the mercenary prearrangement. It is made of that kind and put in that part of the story as a parallel to the literary children, which are the product of love and passion, not mercenary. And the poor woman of the Garden says passionately, 'We must bear or lose.' That is, if we do not bear we lose. It is a great bereavement not to be able to express one's self."

"But here is something I would rather know about," said Amelia. "The Butler's wife saw one of these sprites, and then it seems it was not the

Blind Woman's at all any more. She was very much surprised and grieved, it seems. She exclaims, 'Hers! Not for me?' Now I see no sense in that."

"Listen," I said. "These little children of the Imagination, these conceptions, run all over, out of the house and roundabout in the wood. They are anybody's and everybody's, a common property of the race, yours and mine. We send one to the Butler's wife, the magazine. And then we sometimes find it is not ours at all, for it has been printed; some one has seen it. And what a loss it is! And with what sore bereavement we exclaim, 'Hers! Not for me?' And then there is nothing to do again but go 'walking in the wood,' to see if we can catch another."

"That is hard," she mused.

"Yes," I said. "See how it was with the automobilist. One time his machine broke down on his way thither; he was stalled. So he spread a rug, and he arranged on it pieces of his machine, which, he explains, are 'superfluous parts'—toys. With these he tries to coax the little children to him. But the Inspirations, the thing we have to say, will not come from fussing with our art—

the technic — the poetesque uses of words, gaudy mannerisms of speech. Superfluous parts indeed. That is what they are; the ornaments and toys. Many of us have felt like this automobilist, 'I really do not need all these things.' They are not the essential."

Amelia sat on the couch, thinking deeply.

"Don't you see it all?" I inquired.

"Yes, it is the whole — business. Maybe it is all just a co— "

"I have never seen one that tended to business so thoroughly," I remarked.

"And what of it all, anyway?" she said suddenly. "Why was there anything in it that — could n't be understood?"

"I don't know. They 're just the facts in the case."

"Hidden. Is that a writer's business, to go and hide things? And I knew them all, anyway. It 's just — "

"Yes. It *is* a detective story, I admit that. They are just figures of speech."

"I would rather talk to you about — anything. I know all that, except when I read it. How did you figure it out so easily?"

"You know my motto; the way I find out everything, don't you?"

"Oh, yes. It is, Inquire Within."

"That is one of the best things to do in the first place. I had done that before I read this."

Amelia rose from the couch.

"Come," she said, drawing up a chair. "Let us sit together and look out of the window."

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